

SERMONS

ON

Several Subjects.

By *JOHN CONANT, D.D.*

Publish'd at the Request of

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(Son to the AUTHOR)

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Review Subjects

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SERMON

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SERMON

Preach'd at a
VISITATION.

2 Cor. v. Ver. 1.

For we know, that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.

THE Apostle was by his Occupation a Tent-maker, and therefore in the language of that Craft he chuseth to speak. For speaking of the Body here, he styles it a *Tabernacle*; and of Death, calls it

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the dissolving of this Tabernacle. And very fitly doth he thus express himself: For our Body is a moveable Structure, which is set up but for a time, as a Tent or Tabernacle is. It is to be dissolved and taken down when God sees good, and stands only at the good Pleasure of him who erected it.

Again, The Apostle calls the Body *our earthly House: an House*, with relation to the Soul that dwells therein; and *an earthly House* in respect of its materials, as also in opposition to *that other House, not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*, which the Soul is to take Possession of as soon as it shall by Death be turn'd out of this its earthly House. *If our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands*, saith the Apostle; we have such an House immediately upon the dissolution of this our Tabernacle; that is, we in respect of our better Part the Soul; not the whole Man, that's not in Being, nor shall it be till the Resurrection; nor the Body, that's the Tabernacle which is supposed to be taken down, that returns into its first Principles, and moulders into Dust: With relation to the Soul there-



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therefore must he be understood. But what is this new House, which is prepared for the entertainment of the Soul, as soon as it leaves the Body? Is it Heaven it self, or that celestial Glory which it shall then enjoy? That it goes immediately to Heaven cannot well be doubted of by any Man that searches, understands, and believes the Scriptures; but the heavenly Glory, which the Souls of good Men shall presently after Death be possess of, may seem here to be rather intended, than the Place, in regard the Apostle calls it *an House eternal in the Heavens*, in the close of this first Verse, and in the next Verse, *our House which is from Heaven*; by both which Forms of Speech he seems to distinguish the House, which he here speaks of, from Heaven. And *an House* that Glory may be called by the same Metaphor by which'tis call'd *a cloathing*. The Apostle joins both together, saying, *We groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our House which is from Heaven*. A Man is surrounded and compassed about with his Cloathing, and so he is with his House. So are the Souls of the Faithful in Heaven, surrounded, environed, and as it were cloathed and ar-

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rayed with Glory. But I desire not to be either nice or peremptory in things of this nature. Take *this House* as you please, either for Heaven it self, or for heavenly Glory, or for both, the words will afford us these Three Observations.

I. That the Souls of Men have a Being after Death.

II. That the Souls of good Men being separated from the Body, go immediately to Heaven.

III. That the unspeakable Glory and Happiness which they there enjoy is everlasting.

The First of these is that which I shall at present treat of: The Souls of Men have a Being after Death. When *the earthly House of this Tabernacle is thrown down*, the Inhabitant thereof, the Soul, is not crush'd and destroy'd with the fall of it; that hath still a Being in a State of Separation from the Body.

The Immortality of the Soul will therefore be the Subject of my Discourse. A Point which perhaps might be judg'd scarce needful to be treated of amongst Christians, but that the wicked and
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atheistical Times in which we live, have made the Proof, Confirmation, and Establishment of the most undoubted Truths, even of Fundamentals, not only seasonable, but necessary. To the Shame and great Scandal of our Profession, there have been some Persons, and still are among us, who have endeavour'd to undermine and blow up the very Foundations of our Faith and Hope. There have been those that have not Covertly and Modestly attempted it; but with a strange Boldness, or rather a most prodigious Impudence have stood forth, and bid open defiance against those great Principles of Religion on which the whole Fabrick of it stands. And though this Subject may seem to be somewhat remote from the Business of this Day, yet I hope I may so handle it, as it may at length afford us something not altogether unsuitable to the present Occasion.

The Method which I shall observe shall be this.

First I shall endeavour to confirm this great Doctrine from Scripture; and then consider what natural Reason may further contribute toward the Confirmation of it; and lastly, make Appli-

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cation of what shall have been spoken.

I begin with Scripture; and here we have a Cloud of Witnesses to assert this Truth. I shall content my self to have enumerated some of those many Scriptures which might have been produced and improv'd to my Purpose. This very Chapter from whence my Text is taken will furnish us with several Proofs of the Existence of the Soul after Death. *We groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our House which is from Heaven. v. 2. Our Flesh after Death is cloathed with Worms, and Clods of Dust, as Job speaks Chap. 7. 5. 'tis therefore the surviving and immortal Soul whose Cloathing the Apostle here understands.*

Again, *while we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; and we are rather willing to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. v. 6, 7. How are we present with the Lord when absent from the Body, unless in respect of our Souls which still live in Heaven, there enjoying God while our Bodies lie in the Grave? We therefore labour that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him. v. 9. But if by Death our Souls cease to be, and vanish into nothing, what need had either the Apostles, or*
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we, to be solicitous about our Acceptance with God? Or how could we be capable of being accepted; when we should no longer be? To the same Purpose are those Passages of the same Apostle which we have, *Phil. 1. 21, 22, 23. To me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.* But what Gain, if the Soul perish with the Body?

Again it there follows, *Which I shall chuse I wot not; for I am in a great Strait.* If the Soul died with the Body, the Apostle needed not to have been much straitned. It had been easy to resolve which was most desireable. If Death had been an utter Abolition of the Soul, who would not rather have chosen Life? Furthermore, the Apostle's Phrase by which he expresseth Death is observable. *I desire to depart*, saith he: a clear indication that the Soul in Death doth not cease to be, but only take its leave of the Body, and withdraw to another Place. The Greek Word is *αναλῦσαι*: now *ἀναλύειν*, as a learned Man observes, properly signifies to loose and depart, as Mariners do from the Shore. The Soul by Death is but loosen'd from the Body, and set at Liberty to Sail hence to that Place of Happiness or Misery which God

hath appointed for it. But the Apostle goes on, *I have a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.* How could he by Death come to be with Christ, and to be in a better Condition than here, unless in respect of his Soul, which upon Death should presently be admitted to the immediate Fruition of Christ? That the Soul is without the reach of Death, or of any Tyrant which inflicts it, our Saviour hath taught us, *Matth. 10. 28. Fear not them that kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* If the Soul did Die with the Body, what meant dying *Stephen* by commending his Soul to Christ, *Acts 7. 59.* saying, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit?* Or, what did our Saviour mean when he said to the penitent Thief, *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise?* *Luke 23. 46.* His Body went not then into Paradise; and if his Soul did not survive his Body, how did Christ make good his Promise? If the Soul die with the Body, how was *Lazarus* upon his Death carry'd into *Abram's Bosom*? And how was the rich Man in Hell-torments? *Luke 16. 22, 23.* How is it that we read of *the Spirits of just Men made perfect in Heaven.* *Hebr. 12. 23.* And lastly, how is it that
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we read of the Souls of such as had been slain for the Word of God, *crying under the Altar, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost not thou judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Rev 6. 9, 10.

And so much for Scripture-Evidence of this Truth. In the next Place I come to shew that natural Reason affords us some further Evidence thereof. The very Light of Nature made some imperfect Discoveries thereof to the Heathens. The ancient Heathen Philosophers, especially the wisest and most serious of them were of Opinion that the Soul of Man was immortal. *Plato* taught it his Scholars, and the ancient *Academicks* after him generally held it. And so the *Stoicks* after *Zeno* maintain'd, that the Soul long surviv'd the Body, though indeed they believed that it was at last to be destroyed by the Conflagration of the World, which that Sect of Philosophers held; And though it be true that those Heathens who in some Places of their Writings seem Peremptorily and Absolutely to assert the Souls Immortality, in other Places speak darkly and doubtingly of it, yet we need not much wonder at it, amidst so great Darkness
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with which they were incompassed: for many good Christians are sometimes tempted to question so great a Truth, notwithstanding all the Help and Light they have from Scripture to establish it. *Cicero* in his *Cato major*, though he seems to hesitate and stagger, yet hath some remarkable Expressions, shewing how much he was delighted with the Opinion of the Soul's Immortality. *Si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro, nec mihi hunc errorem quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo.* If I err, saith he, in believing the Souls of Men to be immortal, I do willingly err, and I shall never suffer this pleasing Error to be extorted or wrested away from me while I live. And 'tis a Matter very considerable, which I wish the Atheists of our times would think of, that the best part of the Heathen World, who were most strict in their moral Principles, and regular in their Lives, were of this Judgment, and had these Sentiments of the Soul.

Now if you enquire from whence natural Reason might conclude the Soul's Immortality; I answer, there are divers things which might make it
appear

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II

appear highly probable, and some things that come little short of a Demonstration. I shall not here meddle with those things that are purely Philosophical, they being too difficult and perplex for this Place, and perhaps not so convincing neither.

1. The Excellency of the Soul discoverable by natural Reason, is a very probable Argument of its Immortality. If we view the never sufficiently admired Powers of the Soul, especially the sublime and noble Faculty of Reason, whereby it searcheth into and converseth with all things; whereby it looketh into the Secrets of Nature, and with the greatest Delight employs it self in finding out the hidden Causes of things; whereby it ascends above Nature, contemplates God himself, and though it cannot comprehend, yet views and admires his infinite Perfections: whereby a Man reflects upon himself; which no Creature else besides the Angels can do; whereby he examines and takes the Measure of his own Actions, exerciseth a Judicature within his own Breast, summoning his Thoughts, Words and Actions to appear before the Tribunal of natural Conscience:

science: All this with much more that might be said concerning this and other Faculties of the Soul, as it may very much perswade any considering Man, that this excellent Being the Soul of Man could never arise or start up out of Matter howsoever tempered or prepar'd, but must of Necessity be immediately from God; so 'tis an Argument carrying in it much Probability, that it doth not depend upon the Body in its Existence, but still remains and survives when the Body is demolish'd and thrown down.

2. The Soul doth not necessarily languish or decay with the Body. For though some Operations of the Soul that depend upon the Body, and the Soundness and due Temper of the Organs, are impair'd, weaken'd, interrupted and hinder'd, yet the Soul it self is not thereby impair'd. It was truly said by the Philosopher, *If the Eye of an Old Man were as the Eye of a Child, an Old Man would see as well as a Child.* Whatever Infirmities or Languishments the Body labours under, that yet there is no decay of the Soul is evident from frequent Instances of the Sprightliness and Vigour of the Soul even immediately before

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before Death, and in the nearest Approaches thereof. How often may you have seen a Man whose long-continued Infirmities, and Declinings of Nature, had left him nothing but Skin and Bone, as perfect a Skeleton almost as can be imagined, in so much as a Man would wonder how Soul and Body could hang together so long: and yet the Soul as vigorous, as apprehensive, as quick, clear, and distinct in its Conceptions, as at any time before! Yea more, *Sape evenit animum in ipso divortio potentius agitari, & quasi ex majori suggesto enunciare quæ videt, quæ audit, quæ incipit nosse*, as Tertullian excellently expresseth it. It often falls out, saith he, that at the very Moment almost of the Souls Divorce or Separation from the Body, it is more strongly and vehemently stirred up and acted, so as it vigorously utters and declares as from an higher Pulpit, the Things which it hears and sees, and now begins to know; as if it had been asleep before, and now began to awake and start up, *ab imaginibus ad veritates*, from Dreams and Fancies to Truths, as he goes on. And 'tis wonderful to observe how excellently many dying Persons will discourse of the greatest Things even to the very last Breath. Which I take to be

another Argument of no less Probability, even to natural Reason, that the Soul survives the Body.

3. There are some Instincts and Impressions upon the Hearts of all Men by Nature, from which the Immortality of the Soul may be inferr'd. There is in all Men a natural Horror of some future Reckoning, and of an Account to be given of their wicked Actions, especially of those Crimes which are of a more heinous Nature, and deeper Tincture. And this how secretly soever those Crimes have been committed, and tho' the Offenders, for their Rank and Eminency in the World, be such as take themselves to be Unaccountable to any mortal Man for their Actions, so as they are sufficiently secured against the Stroke of humane Justice. And these Impressions of natural Horror upon the commission of any heinous Crime, are so much the more considerable, in regard that neither the most ignorant, nor the most profligate and desperately wicked Persons are exempted from them.

(1.) There is none so ignorant, but upon some great and horrid Guilt contracted, his own Heart smites him, his
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Conscience condemns him, and the Terrors of some After-reckoning take hold of him and haunt him. And they who have not so much Knowledge, as to be able to give any clear and distinct account of their Fears, or what they are afraid of, yet afraid they are, and cannot be freed from their Fears, do what they can, or go whither they will.

(2.) The most profligate Persons, the most prodigiously Wicked, can never wholly raze out these Impressions of Fear. They may speak big Words, as if they had no Fears of any future Account; they may vapour with those in the Tragedian, as if they could blow away all that is said of the Immortality of the Soul, and of an After-reckoning, with *Rumores vacui, verba inania, & par sollicito fabula somnio*, Cry down all for idle Tales and vain Dreams. But when all is done, they may rather wish that it were so, than be able to believe it. These Impressions of Fear stick in them like a barbed Arrow, that will not be pull'd out. And as they clearly argue a future Account to be given of Men's Actions, so do they also the Continuance of the Soul in Being, which is to be accountable.

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(3.) The Justice of God, which also natural Reason acknowledges and owns, may be another Argument to prove the Immortality of the Soul. Here in this World we see that wicked Men often live in the greatest Prosperity, and bear down all before them; whereas good Men are exercised with many Afflictions, Hardships, and Difficulties. We find that Innocency suffers much, and hath never any Reparations made her here: But Iniquity and Injustice often carry the day, and meet with no check. Now the Justice of God's giving to every Man according to his Works, is not only revealed in Scripture, but plainly and legibly written upon the Heart of every Man; the common Notions and Conceptions, which all Men naturally have of God, being, that he is Just. Wherefore there must be a Reckoning hereafter to set all things right, which how can it be if the Soul be mortal, and there be an end of it with the Body? And this Argument will be yet stronger, if we shall consider that the Soul is the principal Agent in all Wickedness. The Body is but a Servant and Instrument which the Soul makes use of. The Soul plots and contrives all manner
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of Wickedness, and upon the matter puts it in execution also, exercising a Power and Command over the Body. The Understanding consults, directs, and dictates; the Will enjoyneth the execution of the Dictates of the Understanding. The Understanding gives in its Sentence, that such a thing may be done, or should be done; the Will saith, let it be done. The Will commands the Tongue to speak, the Hand to act, the Feet to walk. And should this notorious Offender, the Soul, this Commandress in chief, and first Author of all that Wickedness which is acted by the Body, escape and be withdrawn from Punishment by ceasing to Be, and returning into Nothing? How could this consist with the Justice of God? In short, he that denies the Immortality of the Soul, by Consequence strikes at the Being of God; and is either a flat and downright Atheist, or a Deist, which is the same: For he that divests God of his Justice and righteous Providence, doth in effect deny his Being, while he takes away from him his Nature, and leaves him only his Name.

Use 1. Hath God been pleased to give

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us such excellent and immortal Souls? How wretched then and odious is their Unthankfulness, who endeavour to persuade themselves that they were never beholding to him for any such Favour! Who do what they can to make themselves believe that their Souls are mortal, imploying that excellent Faculty of Reason, which God hath given them, and by which he hath distinguished them from the Beasts, to make themselves equal with the Beasts that perish. An Ingratitude so horrid, that Heaven and Earth may stand astonish'd at it. *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth,* said God pleading against the Jews, *I have nourish'd and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me.* *Is. 1. 2.* But how much more may God in this Case appeal to the inanimate and senseless Creatures, saying, *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, I have given Men reasonable and immortal Souls, and they use their Reason against me, to prove that I never gave them such Souls.*

Use 2. Hath God bestow'd such excellent Souls upon us? It is then an unsufferable and horrible abuse of our excellent Souls, that we defile and debase them

them by Sin, whereby we make one of the most beautiful, and lovely Creatures that ever came out of the Hands of the Creator, the most filthy and loathsome Part of his whole Creation. God gave us a noble Soul, with his own Image imprinted on it, and we by Sin impress the Character of the Devil upon it. God gave us an immortal Soul, and we by abusing it to sin, do what we can to destroy it. How ill must God take it at our Hands, that we thus deface and spoil the Master-piece of his Workmanship! And how little are our own Souls beholding to us for offering to them this foul Indignity!

Use 3. If our Souls be immortal, and we believe them to be so, it highly concerns us to be solicitous what shall become of them in the other World. Did we die like Beasts, and did our Souls perish with the Body as their's do, we might with the Epicure encourage ourselves to make the best of the present Delights and vanishing Pleasures of this World; *Come let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.* But seeing our Souls shall have a Being for ever, and shall immediately after Death pass into an

unchangeable Condition of everlasting Happiness or Misery, *what manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness!* What Diligence should we give to *make our Calling and Election sure!* What striving should there be to *enter in at the strait Gate!* What *working out of our Salvation with Fear and Trembling!* What is the matter with us that these things do so little affect us, if we do indeed give our assent to the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality? Who can sufficiently admire, that if we do really make Account our Souls shall have a Being for ever, we should so play and sport away our time here, spending it in pursuing Toys and catching at Feathers, in the mean time wholly neglecting to secure our Souls eternal well-being in another World. How much of our Time is laid out in trimming, adorning, and pampering our corruptible Bodies, how little in feeding, building up and adorning our never-dying Souls! How much of our Strength and best Abilities is laid out in the pursuit of Riches, Honours, Pleasures, and the desirable Things of this World, which can be of no Advantage to us when Death comes, and how little
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of our Pains is expended to make Provision for Eternity ! A most strange and prodigious Thing, that rational Creatures should act so Irrationally in their highest Concernments.

Use 4. The Immortality and Excellency of the Soul of Man argues how great and weighty a Trust it is, that is committed to us who have the Cure of Souls, and how much it concerns us to give all Diligence to discharge the Duties of this Trust faithfully. An immortal Soul is of that Worth and Dignity, that the Gain of the whole World could not countervail the Loss of it. *Matth. 16. 26.* And such is the Soul of the Meanest, of the Person that is most despicable in your Eyes ; of him that embraceth Dunghils, is cloathed with Rags, and goes from Door to Door to beg his Bread. There is no Difference as to natural Worth and Excellency, between this poor Creatures Soul, and the Soul of a Prince that is cloathed with Scarlet, wields the Scepter, and sits upon the Throne. The Soul of the One is Immortal, and shall have a Being to Eternity ; and so is the Soul of the Other. The Soul of the One must be

in another World the Subject of unspeakable and endless Happiness or Misery, and so must the Soul of the Other. Whatever Difference the Providence of God hath made between them in other Things, their Souls are alike precious; neither was there in all the World found any other sufficient Ransom to redeem the Soul of the One or of the Other, than the Blood of Christ the eternal Son of God, who is himself *over all, God blessed for ever. Silver and Gold*, those corruptible Things, *were of too mean a value*, of too low and cheap a Rate to redeem precious and immortal Souls. *1 Pet. 1. 18.* All the Riches and Treasures in the World, if they were capable of being melted down into one Mass, would not make up a sufficient Price to redeem one Soul, the Soul of the most contemptible, poor, forlorn Wretch in the World, that bears the Name, and hath the Nature of a reasonable Creature. O then how Weighty, or rather how Formidable is the Trust which we have taken upon us, unto whom belongs, and on whom is incumbent the Inspection of Souls! They are very much mistaken who entering upon this sacred Calling, make Account they are driving a Trade to get
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a Livelihood, or so accommodating themselves as they may live more at ease than others do. These are poor and low Things; we understand not our Office and Function, if we do not look upon it as the most Weighty and Important in the World. The Weight of this Charge how little do they consider, who think they can never burthen themselves enough in this Kind! Who heap Charge upon Charge, and Living upon Living, as if the Charge of the Souls of one Flock were not burthen enough. But to the end that these Things may go yet nearer our Hearts, and more deeply affect us, and make us more sensible how much it concerns us to be faithful in our respective Places, let us consider,

(1.) That to be wanting to our Duty in reference to the Souls of Men, is to derive upon our selves the Guilt of Blood: So the holy Scriptures represent the Heinousness and extream Danger of this Sin to us. *I take you to record this Day*, said the *Apostle*, speaking to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, *that I am pure from the Blood of all Men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.* Acts 20. 26, 27. So

then he made Account that he could not have neglected his Duty, but he must have stain'd and polluted his Hands with Blood. And thus God speaking to *Ezekiel*, saith, *when I say unto the wicked he shall surely die, and thou givest him not warning, He shall die in his Iniquity, but his Blood will I require at thy Hands, Ezek. 3. 18.* Now Murther, we know, is a crying Sin. When *Cain* was called to an Account for killing *Abel*, *what hast thou done*, said the Lord to him? *The Voice of thy Brother's Blood cryeth unto me. Gen. 4. 10.* Hence was that severe Charge concerning the Punishment of this Sin. *Ye shall take no Satisfaction for the Life of a Murtherer; but he shall surely be put to Death. Numb. 35. 31.* But of all Murther, there is none like Soul Murther. There is no Blood that sends up so loud a Cry to Heaven for Vengeance as the Blood of Souls. The shrill Cry of the Blood of Souls pierceth the Heavens, and gives God no rest, to use the Prophet's Expression in another Case, until Sentence come forth against the Murtherer.

(2.) Consider we, that to be wanting to our Duty in reference to the Souls
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of Men committed to our Care, is to betray a Trust: To murder a Man though a Stranger, though an Enemy, for the preserving of whose Life no other Obligation lay upon you but what is common to all Men, even this were an horrid Sin. But if the Person were committed to your Care and Protection, if you were by your Superiors requir'd to safeguard and preserve him; and if you had also freely taken upon you this Trust, and promised to use your best endeavours to secure him from Danger; and yet after all this you should be the Man that should lay violent Hands on him and murder him, or betray him to be murder'd by another, this were such an Aggravation of the Sin, as greater could not be. This is our very Case; if Souls committed to our Care and Charge shall perish and everlastingly miscarry through our Unfaithfulness, we contract to our selves not only the Guilt of Soul-murder, but also of Treachery, and of the Violation of a Trust; the highest, the most important, and the most sacred Trust in the World. If we should be guilty of so great a Sin, if in the Skirts of any of us should be found the Blood of Souls, how should we

we stand before his Tribunal hereafter, who laid down his Life to save Souls? At that great and terrible Day *when He shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance of all that know not God, and obey not the Gospel*, a most severe and dreadful Sentence must all they expect who shall then appear with this horrid Guilt upon them. These are great Things, and such as deserve our most serious Consideration.

But alas! how little do some of our Calling mind them, or take them to Heart! Are there not too many who manage their Trust with as little Integrity and good Conscience as if their inward Thought were, that the Gospel is but a Fable, and the great Truths thereof but frightful Inventions and artificial Scar-crows to keep silly People in awe, and the sacred Function of the Ministry a meer Pageantry? Are there not some who so demean themselves in their Places, as if under the Colour of promoting the Salvation of immortal Souls, they had thrust themselves into the Ministry with no other Design than that they might be in a Condition to lead an idle, pleasureable and voluptuous Life?

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But I may not any further enlarge on this Argument, I take indeed no Pleasure in it: I shall rather endeavour to engage my self and others to a more conscientious Attendance on our Work, and a more constant and unwearied Pursuit of the great Ends of our Office and Function. And this I shall do as briefly as I can and so conclude.

1. Then you who are engaged in this great Work, labour to be fully perswaded of the great Acceptance which your faithful and conscientious Endeavours have with God, and of the great Reward that attends them. *They that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* Dan. 12. 3. And tho' you should have little Success, tho' you should seem to have labour'd in vain, and to have spent your Strength for nought, yet under Circumstances of the greatest Discouragement you may say after your Saviour, *Is. 49. 4. Surely my Judgment is with the Lord, and my work is with my God.*

2. Be careful that your Ends and Designs be right, which you propound
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to your self. Be sure that your aim be to serve Christ and save Souls. Make not your sacred Calling subservient to base and unworthy Designs. 'Tis of great Concernment that our Design be right, for this governs our Actions, and steers our Course.

3. Get an high Esteem of Souls, and as far as you can, keep a constant Sense of the Worth of them upon your Heart. He that is duly apprehensive of the Worth of Souls, that are capable of Grace and Glory, capable of seeing and enjoying God to Eternity; Souls which God the Father valued at such a Rate as to give his only begotten Son to redeem them, and which God the Son so highly esteem'd as to be willing to give his Blood to be shed to save them; I say he that is throughly Apprehensive of the Worth of these excellent Beings, how can he chuse but do his utmost to rescue them from eternal Ruin?

4. Be diligent and industrious, be willing to take Pains, and hate to do the Work of the Lord slothfully and deceitfully. He that serves not God with the best that he hath, that grudgeth to
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exert and put forth his Strength in the Service of Christ, that offers him the Lame and the Blind, how can he expect either Acceptance with God, or a Blessing upon his Endeavours ?

5. Give good Example to them that are under your Charge ; he that would win Souls must study to make himself a Pattern of true Piety and sincere Godliness unto them. Though a wicked Man should understand all the deep Mysteries of the Gospel, though he should have attained the most profound and comprehensive Knowledge of heavenly things ; and though he should be endu'd with the Gift of Utterance and Eloquence to Admiration, and though he could speak with the Tongue of an Angel, yet would he do more mischief by his wicked Life, than ever he would do good by his Preaching. To be made an Instrument of the Conversion and Salvation of Souls, is an Honour which God seldom vouchsafes a wicked Man. And as seldom almost to one that studies a smooth Compliance with the Lusts, sinful Humours, and corrupt Affections of all with whom he converseth.

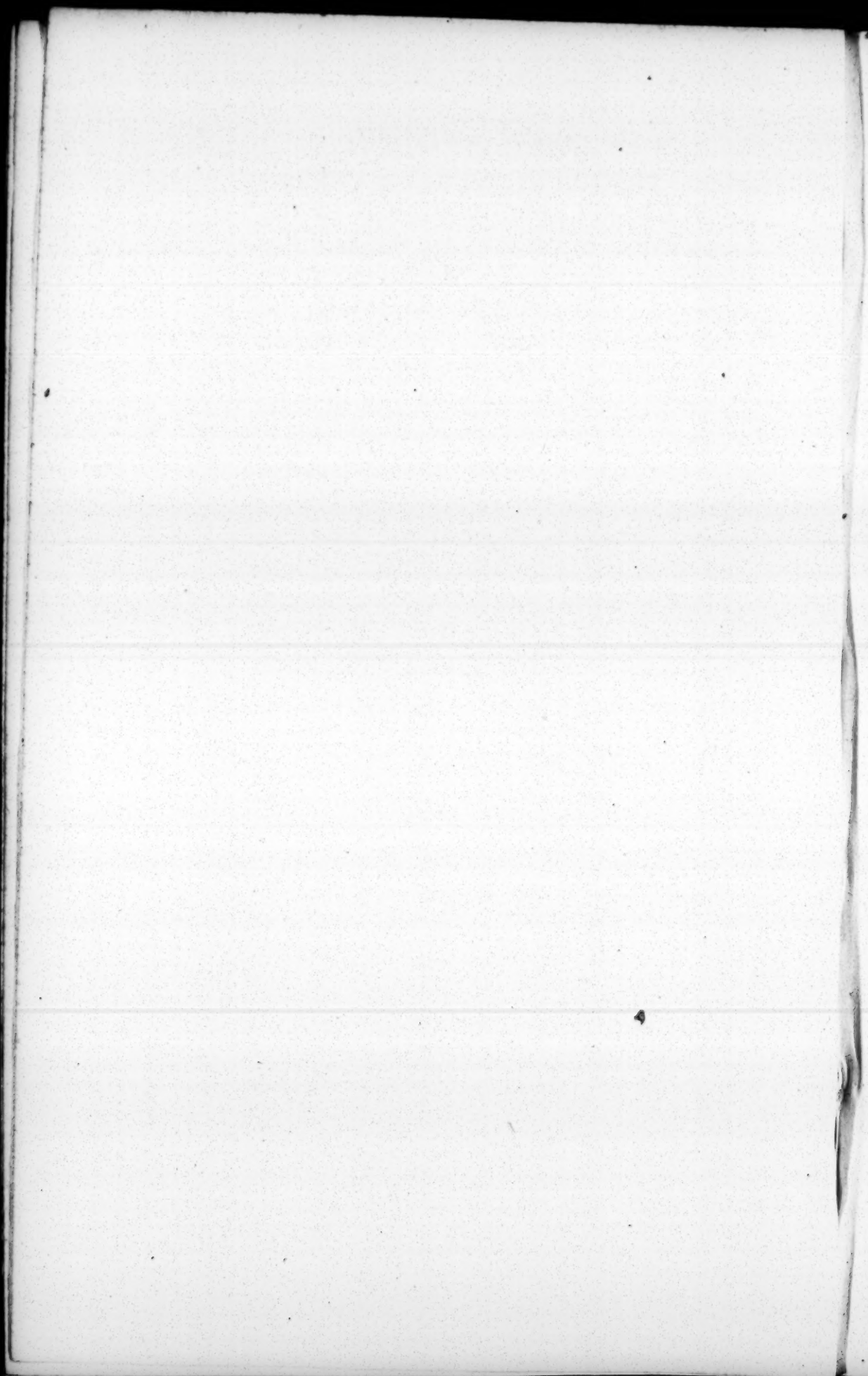
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But as for a Lewd and Debauch'd Minister, he is such a Prodigy as is not to be named or reckoned among Ministers; he is a Reproach and Scandal to his Calling, a Pest to his People, and the greatest Enemy to his own Soul. If he that but neglects his Duty shall be chargable with the Blood of Souls, What shall become of him who by his wicked Life and evil Example shews his People the way to Hell, and goes before them to lead them down to the Chambers of Death? Surely this miserable Creature shall be punish'd with double Destruction; and, without Repentance, the hottest Place in Hell shall be allotted to him.

6. And Lastly, He that would win Souls, and secure them from eternal Misery, must so demean himself towards all Men, as he may, if it be possible, convince the World, and more especially all those which are under his particular Care and Inspection, that he truly and unfeignedly loves them, that he studies, seeks, desires, and longs after nothing more than their Good temporal, spiritual, and eternal, than their Comfort here, and their Happiness hereafter.

after. He must by a diffusive and universal Charity approve himself to the Consciences of all that are not wilfully Blind, or wretchedly Malicious, to be a sincere and cordial Friend to all; he must make it appear, that he is upon all occasions most ready and willing to do Offices of Love to all; and that he takes no greater Pleasure in any thing, than that he may be helpful and serviceable to any, with relation to Soul or Body. Such a Deportment as this, how would it open Men's Hearts to entertain what might do their Souls good. How would it surprize their Affections, and overcome them into a willingness to be made Happy!



S E R M O N II.

John xiv. Ver. 25, 26.

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

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THE time was now approaching, when the Disciples of Christ must be deprived of their Master's Bodily Presence; he was shortly to leave this World and to go to him that sent him. To fit them for the Service in which they were to be employ'd after his De-
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parture from them, and to prepare them to bear his Departure the better, he had taken much Pains in giving them Instructions and Comfort. But because they did not fully and distinctly understand some of those things which he had taught them, and had forgotten much of what they knew, and were exceedingly troubled to think of his Departure from them; he is further pleased to let them know what Provision he had made for the supply of his Absence: *viz.* That the Holy Ghost should do all that for them, which he had hitherto done himself; so that whatever their Fears might be for the present, they should afterwards find themselves to be no Losers by his Absence.

And hence we may by the way observe, That God hath several ways of doing Good to his People, and when it pleaseth him that one way shall cease, he hath another in readiness. *Elijah* must for some time hide himself by the Brook *Cherith*, and drink of the Water thereof, and be supplied with Bread and Flesh by the Ravens: but when for want of Rain the Brook is dried up, then he must get him to *Zerephath*, and dwell

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dwell there, because there God had commanded a Widow Woman to sustain him. *1 Kings 17. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.* When *Hagar's* Bottle of Water is spent, and she is thereupon in great Distress, God opens her Eyes, and she sees a Well of Water to supply her. *Gen. 21. 19.* So here in the Text, when Christ's bodily Presence can no longer be enjoyed, he sends his Spirit to be a Comforter, a Teacher, and a Remembrancer in his Room.

It should teach us Dependance on God in every Condition. He is never at a Loss in helping us. 'Tis true he hath not bound himself up to do us good still in one and the same Way, neither have we reason to expect it: but this we may rest assured of, he will never utterly fail or forsake any of his; and therefore if our Succours fail one Way, they shall come in Another; if one Fountain be stopped up, another shall be opened. But O how great is our Unbelief, and how vain and groundless are our Fears! How do we before-hand many times afflict our selves with the Thoughts of our most sad and forlorn Condition, if such a Friend or Support which we lean on should be taken away!

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If this or that Means of our present Subsistence or Livelihood should fail ! As if God were not all-sufficient to provide for us some other Way ! Or as if he were restrain'd to work by this or that particular Instrument, and could do nothing for us at all, unless in such a Way, and by such Means. Hereby we declare, that we have low and mean Thoughts of God, measuring him by our selves, and making his Power, and Wisdom of as narrow a Compass as our own. We consider not, that his Power and Wisdom are infinite, and that he needs not this or that particular Instrument to succour us with. Let all second Causes, from whence we promise our selves, Comfort, be removed, yet will he never be to seek how to do us good. *The Earth is the Lords, and the Fulness thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein. Ps. 24. 1.* He hath all the Creatures in a Readiness to do him Service, and to be serviceable to any of his for their Help and Succour, as he shall see good to employ them. *Every Beast of the Forest is his, and the Cattle on a Thousand Hills. Ps. 50. 10.* *All the Treasures of Darknes, and hidden Riches of secret Places, are at his Command and*
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Disposal, *Is. 35. 3.* And will you confine or limit him to help you and supply you in such a Way, and by such Means as you have in your Eye, and as you it may be too much rely and depend upon? and when that is gone, must your Hopes also fail, and sink and die away, together with those outward Props and Supports on which you built them? Then certainly you have made an Idol of the Creature, and set it up in the Throne of God; you have trusted in Man, and made Flesh your Arm, and suffer'd your Heart to depart from the Lord: You have, at least in some measure, *forsaken the Fountain of living Waters, and hewed you out Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water,* as God complains of his People, *Jer. 2. 13.* Creatures, the best, the wisest, the strongest of them, are poor, weak, mutable and uncertain Props to be rely'd on, and the harder we lean on them, the more likely they are to fail us. For our carnal Confidences are very displeasing to God, and provoke him to blast those things in which we confide too much. As soon therefore as we observe our Hearts thus withdrawn from God, and more intent upon the Creature for support and com-

fort than on him, let us immediately labour to recover our selves, and with *David, Ps. 116. 7. Call upon our Souls to return to their rest.* For if we rely on God, he will never fail us; he is *an everlasting Rock. Is. 26. 4. He forsaketh not those that seek him, and put their trust in him. Ps. 9. 10.* But in departing from God, and betaking our selves to Creatures, we greatly prejudice our selves in forsaking our own Mercy, as the Prophet *Jonah* speaks; *Jon. 2. 8.* and we greatly injure them on whom we rest, while we lean so hard on them that we break them. But I have stayed too long on this Point.

In the next Place we may observe, how graciously our Saviour considers the present Condition, Necessities, and Exigencies of his Disciples. They were afraid, lest he being to depart hence, and to go to his Father, they should be left destitute and comfortless; therefore he promiseth to send them another Comforter: they were without all question, solicitous and thoughtful what they should do when their Master should leave them, whose divine Instructions they now enjoy'd, and to whom they now might upon all Occasions

sions apply themselves for Resolution of all their Doubts, and for Counsel and Advice in all their Difficulties; therefore he promiseth them a Teacher; they had already forgotten much of what he had deliver'd to them, and therefore he promiseth them a Remembrancer. Thus in a few words he meets with all their Troubles, and faith enough to scatter all their Fears. Considering what their present Condition was, and what they most stood in need of; nothing could have been spoken to them more pertinently and suitably. His Carriage herein is a good Pattern for our Imitation. As Christ did, so should we also consider the particular Conditions, and present Exigencies of those with whom we converse, and accordingly apply our selves to them. *Heb.* 10. 24. By means of the Neglect whereof, much may be spoken to very little purpose. Many good things you may utter, which falling beside the Condition of those to whom you speak, may be as Water spilt upon the Ground. Many times you speak at random, never considering whether they to whom you speak be concern'd therein or no: Or you rather consider what you can best

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speak to, than what others most need;
 or what will best gratify and please
 them, rather than what may do them
 most good. 'Tis the seasonableness of
 what is spoken, and the suitableness
 thereof to the present estate of those
 to whom 'tis spoken, that makes it both
 Acceptable and Profitable. *A Word
 spoken in due season, how good is it?* Prov.
 15. 23. We cannot indeed, in many
 Cases, understand the state of others so
 well, as to be able rightly to apprehend
 what they most need, or what would
 be most seasonably spoken to them:
 But seeing we cannot, it concerns us to
 look up to God, and desire him so to
 over-rule our Thoughts, and guide our
 Tongues, as we may not spend our
 Breath in vain, and *speak into the Air*,
 as the Apostle tells us in another Case,
 1 Cor. 14. 9.

But to come a little nearer the Words.
 Before I proceed to consider the chief
 Contents of this Scripture, I shall speak
 a word to some Questions which may
 be moved, in order to our better Un-
 derstanding of what shall afterwards
 be deliver'd.

The First Question may be concern-
 ing the Persons, to whom the Promise
 of

of the sending of the Holy Ghost was made. Was it made to the Apostles and Disciples of Christ which then were? If so, what then doth the Promise avail us? And how are we concern'd therein? For Answer hereunto,

1. It must be granted, that something in the Promise of the Holy Ghost, did peculiarly concern the Apostles, and Disciples which then were; Namely, The pouring out of the Spirit in that extraordinary and miraculous manner of which we read *Acts 2. 2, 3, 4.* *When on the Day of Pentecost, suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty Wind, and filled all the House where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, that sate upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* This more signal and stupendous Coming of the Holy Ghost, with these glorious Solemnities, was intended by the Promise in a special manner, but yet so as to relate only to that Time and Place, when, and where it had its Accomplishment; neither were after Ages, by vertue of that Promise to expect the like Effusion of the Spirit

Spirit any more, as to all those Circumstances and Solemnities thereof.

2. But however, yet are we also otherwise nearly concern'd in that miraculous Effusion of the Spirit on them, and that in a double respect.

1. That miraculous Pouring out of the Spirit is an high Confirmation of our Faith, touching the Truth of the Gospel by them publish'd, and deliver'd down to us. Had that which they Preach'd concerning our Salvation by Christ, been any other than the Truth of God, he would never have born Witness to it by such miraculous Discoveries of his Power and Goodness. We may be well assured, the God of Truth would never have done so great Things to procure Credit to a Lye, and thereby to assist the Publishers of the Gospel to impose upon the World, and delude Mankind the more efficaciously. This would neither have consisted with the Truth, nor the Goodness of God.

2. The extraordinary Gifts then conferr'd on the Apostles, did enable them to transmit to Posterity, and deliver down to the Church, for the Benefit of all succeeding Generations, the glad Tydings of the Gospel. Had they not
had

had an extraordinary Measure of the Spirit, how could they have taught us infallibly? And how could we safely have rely'd on their Testimony? And had they not had the Gift of Tongues, how should the Gospel have been so speedily Propagated, and Entertained among so many several Nations of different Languages? How many Countries, and possibly ours among the rest, might have been in Darknes till this Day, for ought we know, had it not been for the extraordinary Gift of Tongues?

3. But as for those Gifts, Graces and Consolations of the Spirit, which are not of that extraordinary and miraculous Nature, the Promise of the Spirit as to these, belongs as well to us as to them.

You will say, that Promise of the Spirit made, and several times renew'd, seems to have been intended for the Comfort and Quieting of the Apostles and Disciples, that were then about Christ, and Conversed with him: For unto them our Saviour ever applies himself, and directs his Speech, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th Chapters of this Gospel, in all which this Promise is
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mention'd. And these were the Persons, whom, before his Ascension, he commanded to wait at *Jerusalem* for the Promise of the Father, *Acts* 1. 4. that is, for the fulfilling of this Promise of the holy Spirit: And lastly, accordingly we have the Accomplishment of the Promise recorded in the next Chapter, as hath been said.

To all this I answer, That the Apostles, to whom this Promise was made, are not to be look'd upon meerly as private Persons, but as Representatives of the whole Church, or Body of Believers, that should be in all succeeding Ages of the Church; and so, setting aside those things that were of an extraordinary Nature, the Promise of the Holy Ghost, made to them, was in them as the Representatives of the Community of Christians, made to all Believers that should be to the End of the World. And this Promise of the Spirit is made good to all Believers. *The Spirit of God dwelleth in them.* 1 Cor. 3. 16. *They are all led by the Spirit,* Rom. 8. 14. *And if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.* Rom. 8. 9. And so much in Answer to that First Question.

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A Second Question may be, Why the Spirit was not to be sent till after Christ's Ascension? Had they not the Holy Ghost before this time? If they had him not, how came it to pass that Christ had not bestow'd the Spirit on them while he was with them?

Ans^r. They had the Holy Ghost before, for otherwise they had not belong'd to Christ; they had been none of his, as the Apostle expressly affirms in the Place last mention'd: But the pouring out of the Spirit, in a more plentiful measure, was reserved till after Christ's Ascension. And this was the fittest Season, whether we consider the Honour of Christ, or the Necessities of those upon whom the Spirit was poured out.

1. It was the fittest Season in Reference to Christ's Honour: It suited best with his present Condition. Before, he was either in the State of his Humiliation, or had in his Resurrection taken but the first Step towards his Exaltation, and so it was too soon to scatter Gifts, as Conquerors were wont to do, when they rode in Triumph. When Christ had triumphed, when he had ascended up on high, and led Captivity captive,
then

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then was the fittest time for him to *give Gifts unto Men. Eph. 4. 8. Ps. 68. 18.* When upon his Conquest of Death and Hell, and all the Powers of Darknes, he was now received into Heaven, and seated at the Right-hand of God, it was most agreeable to that Height of Dignity, to which he was exalted, to make these royal Demonstrations of his Power, Bounty and Goodness. *St. Peter* therefore makes the pouring out of the Spirit, a Consequent and Fruit of his Exaltation. *Being by the Right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, (saith he) he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. Acts 2. 33.* And so the Evangelist suspends the giving of the Spirit till the Glorification of Christ, *Joh. 7. 39. The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

2. It was the fittest Season, if we consider the Necessities of those on whom the Spirit was poured out: For now that Christ had with-drawn his bodily Presence, they more needed the Spirit, and that in a fuller Measure than while he was present with them.

(1.) Besides the Loss which they sustained by Christ's Departure, which
was

was to be made up to them by the more abundant Communications of the Holy Ghost; now they were full of Heaviness and Sadness, of Sorrow and Perplexity of Spirit, for allaying whereof they stood in need of stronger Consolations.

(2.) They had now greater work to do, and therefore greater Assistances of the Holy Ghost were needful. While Christ was with them, he did not so much employ them, as prepare them for Employment. He by his Instructions and holy Example train'd them up, and fitted them for those great and weighty Services, which after his Ascension they must undertake. They were Learners before, and now they must be Teachers. They must by the Preaching of the everlasting Gospel enlighten the World, pull down the Kingdom of Satan, set up and enlarge the Kingdom of Christ; and *who could be sufficient for these things*, without a plentiful Measure of the Spirit?

(3.) They must now expect to meet with fiercer Opposition from the Devil and the World. They might be sure, the Devil and his Instruments would not suffer the Kingdom of Darkness to fall without blows. All the Powers of Dark-
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ness and the wicked World would join together, and unite their Strength to uphold Satan's Kingdom, and maintain his Interest. Wherefore an extraordinary measure of the Spirit would now be necessary, to inspire the Apostles with Courage to pursue their work against such Opposition. In all these respects the sending of the Holy Ghost was now most seasonable.

And this is that which we also may observe; though we have neither the Comforts, nor the Instructions, nor the Assistances of the Spirit at command, as 'tis not fit we should, yet God affords them to us when we most need them. I say, when we most need them, not always when we think we most need them. Of our greatest Need, and the best Season for the Holy Spirit's coming in to our Assistance, the most wise God must be Judge, and not we our selves; who are hasty, and impatient of Waiting, and ever think the present time to be the fittest Season, and that our present need is the greatest: But to return to our Business.

If the sending of the Holy Ghost must not be till Christ's Ascension, why had it not been on Ascension-Day? what fitter

fitter Season had there been, may carnal Wisdom say, for the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles in that glorious Manner, than immediately upon Christ's Reception into Heaven?

Ans. I answer, 'Tis not fit that we should be so bold as to oppose our carnal Reason against the Wisdom of God. When we see plainly what God hath done, it becomes not us to be framing Cavils against it; as if he might have done well to have Consulted with us, and taken our Advice: For, doubtless, what he hath done is best, whatever it be, and how contrary soever it may seem to our Reason, or Interest. But as for the Matter in Hand, though we are not always to be acquainted with all the Grounds and Reasons of God's Providences, yet here we have enough in open view to silence our Enquiries, and satisfy us, that there wanted not apparent and most important Reasons for the respiring of the coming of the Holy Ghost, till some Days after Christ's Ascension.

(1.) So great a Mercy as the coming of the Holy Ghost was to be waited for, that they might set the higher Price
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upon it. And what was Ten Days waiting for such a Mercy? We are apt to slight and under-value those things which come in upon us suddenly; but the respiting the bestowing of them for some time, raiseth our esteem of them.

(2.) It was very expedient that they should want the bodily Presence of Christ for some time before the Holy Ghost should be given to make up their loss. For in the mean-while, as their Sense of, and Sorrow for his Absence increased, so were they thereby prepar'd to entertain the Blessed Spirit, that came in his Room, with greater Joy and Thankfulness. To be shut up for some time in Darkness, makes the Light more welcome and comfortable when we may again enjoy it: and so to have been for some time desolate and destitute of our wonted Comforts, makes the return of them, or the coming of other Comforts in their Place, much more refreshing and Satisfactory to us.

(3.) It was meet that their Faith in the Truth of Christ's Promise should be for a while exercised before the Mercy promised was given in. God is not wont to fulfil Promises of great things till he hath some Proof of our Faith,
and

and made trial of us, whether we can believe, and rest upon his Promises, though he doth not presently make them good.

(4.) So signal a Mercy was to be the Fruit of much Prayer: and this was that which they were chiefly exercised in from the Time of Christ's Ascension, till the coming of the Holy Ghost. That those Ten Days were mostly spent in Prayer, we may gather from what we read in the first and second *Chapters* of the *Acts*, where the Manner of Christ's Ascension, and what follow'd thereupon are recorded: We there read that immediately before the Ascension of our Lord, and when he was even just ready to leave his Apostles, he commanded them that they should not depart from *Jerusalem*, but wait there for the Promise of the Father, for the Coming of the Holy Ghost, with which, said he, ye shall be baptized not many Days hence. Hereupon Christ ascending up into Heaven, they, as they had been commanded, return'd from Mount Olivet, the Place whence Christ ascended to *Jerusalem*, and continued there all with one Accord in Prayer and Supplication. *Acts* 1. 12, 13, 14. In the Beginning of the next Chapter

we read, *That when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one Accord in one Place*, being met together for Prayer no doubt, in which Duty they still persevered; and then it was that the Holy Ghost came upon them in that miraculous Manner. Having from the Time of Christ's Ascension hitherto continued in Prayer, they were now fitter to receive so invaluable a Mercy as the Gift of the Holy Ghost. By so long Prayer and Waiting, their Expectations were raised, their Desires inflam'd and heighten'd, their Hearts open'd and enlarged; and the Value of the Mercy pray'd and waited for was enhanced; and so in all Respects they were now better prepared to receive that inestimable Gift, which Christ had promised, and to give meet Reception to that divine Guest which the Father in his Name would send them. It was not in the least to their Prejudice, but every Way much to their Advantage, that the Coming of the Holy Ghost was not sooner.

We would have good Things drop into our Mouths while we are asleep; we would have them, if not before we desire them, yet as soon as we ask for them.

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To pray instantly, and wait long for them is grievous to us: If we must have them only upon such Terms, we think we purchase them at a dear Rate. But all this while we are much mistaken: God by thus obliging us to pray and wait, doth but commend his Mercies to us, and qualify us for a more devout and grateful Entertainment of them. Our praying and waiting doth but add to the Mercies we are praying and waiting for. If the Things be good in themselves, certainly they will be twice as good when we shall have obtain'd them by much Prayer, and when we shall have so long waited for them till we are in some good Measure fitted to receive them. O think not God deals hardly with you in making you pray and wait: 'tis to make your Mercies sweeter and more acceptable, 'tis to render them the greater Blessings to you; God therein consults your Benefit and Comfort, and therefore be not unwilling to wait for them as long as he shall see good.

Another Question may be, How the Holy Ghost is said to be sent?

Answ. By this Mission, or Sending of the Holy Ghost, we must not apprehend any local Motion, or mutation of

Place to be imply'd, as ordinarily when a Person is said to be sent. The Holy Ghost being God, is every where present, and therefore cannot properly be said to remove, or go from one Place to another: For if it were so, he must be supposed to come to a Place where he was not before; which would destroy his Omnipresence. Wherefore the Coming of the Holy Ghost signifies only the efficacious or operative Presence of that Blessed Spirit; or rather the Discovery or Manifestation of his powerful and gracious Presence, in and by such Operations upon the Soul as were not before. And by this 'tis easy to understand, that the Father's sending the Holy Ghost imports no more than his Will, that the Holy Ghost should in such Operations manifest his Presence; much in the same sense, God the Father's sending his Son into the World, implies no more than his Will, that he should take our Nature upon him, and therein make such a Discovery of his Presence here in the World, as before he had never made.

The last Question which I shall speak to, is, In what Sense we are to understand our Saviour, when he saith, that the Father will send the Holy Ghost in his Name.

Ans^w.

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Ans^w. The Holy Ghost may be said to be sent by the Father in the Name of Christ, in these Three respects.

1. In regard he is sent in Answer to Christ's Prayers and Intercession. *I will Pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter*, saith he, *Joh. 14. 16.*

2. In regard he is sent as Purchased by Christ's Merits. 'Tis upon the Account of his Sufferings that the Holy Ghost is sent. He hath by his Death purchased and obtained for us this rich and inestimable Mercy, that the Holy Ghost should be sent and bestow'd on us; which therefore was not in such a plentiful Measure poured out till after his Death.

3. In regard that the Holy Ghost comes in Christ's room, and supplies the want of his bodily Presence; whom our Saviour therefore calls *another Comforter*, in the Place before-mention'd, *Joh. 14. 16.* And so much concerning the Questions.

Now we may from these words infer by the way, Three things of high Concernment, which I shall but mention, because they are not the Things that are chiefly intended and aimed at in this Scripture.

1. We may from these words gather the Personality of the Holy Ghost, which divers Hereticks in former Ages of the Church, and in later Times have deny'd. That the Holy Ghost is not meerly a Quality, nor a Motion, or Operation, as some would have it; but a Person, the very Form of Speech here used, clearly proves to any Man that is not resolv'd to shut his Eyes against the Truth: For our Saviour doth not say, the Father would send *Comfort* only, but *the Comforter*, which plainly implies a Person administering Comfort. And then again he further adds, He, meaning the same *Comforter*, the Holy Ghost, *He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance*. Now who would ever have spoken in that manner, *He shall teach you, and bring all things to your remembrance*, unless he had spoken of a Person, and intended so to be understood? He that teacheth, and he that brings all things to remembrance, what should he else be but a Person?

2. We may from these words infer the Deity of the Holy Ghost, as well as his Personality. That he is not only a Person, but a Divine Person, I mean such

such a Person as is truly God, we may hence gather, because he is Promised, not only to make up and compensate the Apostle's Loss, in being deprived of Christ's bodily Presence, but to make it up with Advantage. The Holy Ghost was to come in Christ's room, and so fully to compensate their Loss by his Absence, that they should be great Gainers by his with-drawing from them his bodily Presence; the Holy Ghost should convey more Comfort, and Strength, and Light into their Souls, than ever they receiv'd from Christ's bodily Presence, and Converse with them. This is clearly imply'd when our Saviour saith; *It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* As if he had said, You wish for my bodily Presence, and cannot but grieve to think of my departing from you; if I tell you I must leave you, you are wholly overwhelm'd with Sorrow: But alas! you do not understand your Interest; my with-drawing from you will be to your great Advantage; if I go away, the Comforter will come, and you shall find that his coming will much more avail you,

you, than my bodily Presence would have done. Now I say, if the Holy Ghost were to come in Christ's room, to make up their Loss by his Absence with such Advantage, he must needs be more than a Creature. For undoubtedly no Creature's Presence could be of equal Advantage to them with the Presence of Christ: much less could the Presence of any Creature make them Gainers by the Loss of Christ's Presence. But the Force of this Argument, to prove the Deity of the Holy Ghost, will better appear when I shall afterwards have spoken somewhat of the Particulars, for which the Holy Ghost was promised to be sent.

3. We may also from these words infer the Trinity of Persons in the divine Nature, or Godhead. Here is God the Father, who sendeth the Holy Ghost; here is the Holy Ghost, who is sent; and here is the Son, in whose Name the Holy Ghost is sent by the Father, and who is the Speaker here, and saith, *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, &c.* Nothing can be more evident than that he who is here said to send, and he who is sent, and he in whose Name he
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is sent, are distinct Persons ; now every One of these being God, as from many other Scriptures is manifest, concerning every One of them severally, it undeniably follows, that there are Three distinct Persons in the Godhead. But I may not any longer insist on these Points ; I come to that which is principally intended in this Scripture. The Holy Ghost is here Promised under a Threefold Capacity ; as a *Comforter*, as a *Teacher*, and as a *Remembrancer* ; and under all these Capacities he is to be sent by the Father, in the Name of the Son. Of these in order, briefly.

1. The Holy Ghost is promised as a *Comforter*, and that not only to the Apostles, but to all true Believers, to the whole Church of Christ, and to every sincere and living Member thereof ; ὁ Παράκλητος, the *Comforter*, by way of Eminency. And that

1. In respect of the Excellency of his Consolations ; no other beside this *Comforter* can infuse such sweet, heavenly, divine, ravishing Consolations into the Soul of a truly humbled Sinner. This *Comforter* can pour in so much of Heaven into the Soul, while here upon Earth, as that the frail Body shall not be

be able to bear the Transports and Extasies of the Mind.

2. In respect of the Efficacy of his Consolations. When all outward Means can do nothing toward the ease, relief, and Comfort of a distressed Soul, the healing of a wounded Spirit, the binding up of a broken Heart ; when all other Comforters prove Physicians of no value, nay, when it may be, instead of closing up and healing the Wound, they rather widen it ; this Comforter steps in at last, and works a perfect Cure ; speaks such Peace to the troubled Soul, as nothing can disturb it, and fills it with such Joy, as none can take from it.

(3.) He is the Comforter in regard of the Extent of his Consolations. They are not suited only to the particular Condition of this or that Person, and not to the Condition of others ; nor to such or such particular Cases, and not to others. He hath a Salve for every Sore, Consolations exactly suited to the particular States, to all the various Cases of all true Believers in the World, of all that have been, are, or ever shall be. He is the *Comforter*, because an universal Comforter, reaching all the Troubles of all *his*, that upon any Account

count soever stand in need of Comfort.

(4.) 'Tis his Office to be their Comforter, and therefore This is his Name and Title. We do not give a Man the Title of a Lawyer or a Physician for advising in one particular Case, or curing some one particular Infirmary; but to him who takes upon him the Office and Employment of advising or healing all that come to him, or at least of doing his best Endeavour in Order thereunto. In this Sense also is the Holy Ghost the Comforter; he ministers Comfort as I may so speak *ex Officio*, by Vertue of that Office and Employment which he hath been pleased to take upon himself.

(5.) 'Tis his chief Employment, his principal Office to Comfort; for though he hath other Employments, though he be a *Teacher* and *Remembrancer*; though he sometimes doth counsel and advise, admonish and exhort, rebuke, and convince; yea, though he doth sometimes threaten and terrify; yet all this he doth in Order to his being a *Comforter*; that he may thus prepare the Soul for *Comforts*, and make it entertain and relish them the better. Well then may the Holy Ghost be stiled the *Comforter*, there being none like him,
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and all other *Comforters* in Comparison of him deserving no better *Stile* than that of *Job's Friends*, *miserable Comforters*.

Now to apply this. Is the Holy Ghost the *Comforter*?

1. Then let us be willing to be under that Discipline by which we may be fitted to receive his Consolations. The holy Spirit according to his usual Method and ordinary Way of Working, is first a Spirit of Bondage, and then a Spirit of Adoption, as the Apostle tells us, *Rom. 8. 15.* He convinceth Men of Sin, humbles them, and casts them down, and then he raises them up again, and comforts them. We are all for Comfort, that we would have, that we long after and catch at; but we care not for those Methods of our heavenly Physician, by which he prepares us for it, and makes us fit to entertain it, to taste and relish, to prize and value it. As you would have sound Comfort, permanent and lasting Comfort, so be careful that a sure and firm Foundation of Comfort be first laid; think not the Time long, nor the Trouble too great, if (whilst by the severer Discipline of outward Afflictions and inward Troubles, Sin and the Ways there-
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of are imbitter'd to you) you are humbled for your Sins, your Heart is disengaged to, and taken off from them; and your Soul is by Degrees wrought to a sincere and earnest Desire and Endeavour to leave them, and to give up your self to walk in every Way that is pleasing unto God. Until this be done, 'tis in vain to expect sound Comfort. Satan may transform himself into an Angel of Light, and delude us with false Comforts, by which we may be further harden'd in our Sins, and blinded to our Destruction: but the Joys of the Holy Ghost, the Consolations of the Spirit, we can never be capable of till we are contented to part with all our Sins. How should he be the Holy Spirit, if he should speak Peace to us, cheer us up and comfort us, while we go on in our sinful Courses?

2. If the Holy Ghost be the Comforter, let us apply our selves to him for Comfort in all our Troubles, especially our spiritual Troubles. To whom do we apply our selves in any Perplexities or Difficulties that concern our Estates, but the Learned in the Law, whose Calling and Employment it is to be helpful and assistant to us in such Cases?

Cases? To whom do we betake our selves in bodily Sickness, but to the Physician, whose Profession it is to be ready and willing to lend us his help when our Condition calls for it? So to whom should we go for Comfort in our Troubles, but to him whose Office it is to be our Comforter? And who is such a Comforter, that there is none like him in all the World? And as we go to Men with Confidence for Assistance in that Way, in which their Calling and Profession lies; so may we, and should we go with humble Confidence to the Holy Ghost for Comfort, assuring our selves that as he is most able, so he is most ready and willing to relieve and assist us in all our Troubles, provided still that we are in some Measure fit to receive him; and that the present Condition of our Souls be not such, as that, Comfort it self, Things standing with us as they do, would do us more hurt than good.

3. If the Holy Ghost be the Comforter, this should encourage and animate, fortify and strengthen us against all the Troubles and Discomforts which this evil World, or the Power and Malice of Hell it self may threaten us with. If we belong to Christ, and have his Spirit

Spirit dwelling in us, which all *his* are endued with, then *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World*, as St. *John* speaks, 1 *Joh.* 4. 4. If the Holy Ghost be in us, to comfort and refresh us, who shall be able to trouble or afflict us? All the Power of Men and Devils, of the whole Creation, is too weak to withstand or make void the Comforts of the Holy Ghost. But here also Care must still be taken, that we give not our spiritual Enemies Advantage against us, and offend not our best Friend, the Holy Ghost our Comforter, by our Sins. If we so do, we shall have small Reason to look for those Comforts, which are reserv'd for them, whose constant Study it is, in all things to approve themselves unto him.

4. Attend and heed the Comforts of the Holy Ghost; and most readily and thankfully entertain and embrace them when they are offer'd. Such is our Carelessness, that sometimes we mind not those Comforts, which the Holy Ghost infuseth into our Hearts, and so through our Heedlessness they slide away, and are lost: and such is our Unbelief, not without a Mixture of Perverseness and Obstinacy, that sometimes

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we thrust away those Consolations which are offered us, and refuse to be Comforted, as it was with the Psalmist, *Psal.* 77.

2. But here (1.) 'Tis great Unthankfulness to be guilty of one or the other; either to be mindless and regardless of the Comforts, that from the Operation of the Holy Ghost come in upon our Hearts, or to refuse them, and endeavour to drive them back or stifle them.

(2.) 'Tis the way to quench the Spirit, and give him just cause to withdraw his Consolations from us. They deserve to go without Comfort, who give the Consolations of the Spirit no better Entertainment.

I come now to the next Thing, or the second Capacity, under which the Holy Ghost is sent, in those words, *He shall teach you all things.* Which if we understand with reference to the Apostles, then the meaning is, that the holy Spirit should teach them all those things, which they had heard from the Mouth of Christ, but understood not; he should teach them the same things over again, in another manner than they had been taught them before.

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Many things, which Christ had deliver'd by Word of Mouth, they either understood not at all, or understood but imperfectly, and by halves; but now through the Illumination and Instruction of the Holy Ghost, they should have a clear, distinct and full Understanding of them. 'Tis true that Christ's Teaching of them, was not meerly a verbal and outward Teaching, but such as was accompanied with the inward Teachings of the Spirit in some Measure; tho' not in so full a Measure as after his Ascension. Christ could have enabled them to have understood all Things as fully and clearly before, if it had so pleased him. But it was the good Pleasure of the Father and himself, that this should not be till the coming of the Holy Ghost, in that signal and eminent Manner, of which we read *Acts 2*. And among other Reasons why the full Understanding of what Christ had taught them was reserved for that Time, this was one, and not the least considerable; God would have them understand all Things then on a sudden, that their Knowledge being infused into them in such a miraculous Way, both they themselves and others, might be the more

fully perswaded and assur'd, that the Things so made known to them, were the Truths of God, and that they were divinely inspired in what they taught others. But now if under the Instructions of Christ, they had by little and little come to the full Understanding of all those Things before, then might their Knowledge have seem'd to be attained in the ordinary Way of Instruction, that is usual among Men; and so God had not given to them, and all the World, this high Demonstration of the undeniable Truth of those Things, which they were in such an extraordinary and miraculous Way, perfectly acquainted with.

And if we consider those Words, he shall teach you all Things, with relation to the whole Church of Christ, of which the Apostles were the Representatives, then the meaning of them is, that the Holy Ghost should teach God's People all necessary and saving Truths. Err or be ignorant they may in those things that are not fundamental, and the Knowledge whereof is not absolutely necessary to Salvation, but not in Matters fundamental, where Error or Ignorance would not consist with
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a State of Salvation. The Holy Ghost with Reference to this his Teaching, is called the Spirit of Truth, *Joh. 15. 26. The Spirit of Truth which guides us into all Truth. Joh. 16. 13.* A great and singular Priviledge it is to be thus taught of the Holy Ghost, taught of God. For his Teachings are not as the Teachings of Man. *Who teacheth like him? saith Elihu, Joh 26. 22.* Who teacheth like the Holy Ghost? He teacheth

(1.) Unerringly and Infallibly; so cannot Man. The holiest, the wisest of Men may be deceiv'd and deceive; may be mis-led themselves and mis-lead others.

(2.) He teacheth Effectually; he so teacheth, as they whom he undertakes to teach, shall be sure to learn. No Impediment or Incapacity in the Learner can hinder the Effect of his Teaching; for he can irradiate and enlighten the dark Minds of Men, he can *open their Understandings*, as 'tis said our Saviour did, *Luke 24. 45.* he can give Understanding and Capacity where he finds none. This is above the Power of Man; he can teach where he meets with a Subject that is capable of Teaching; he can so teach, I mean, as he that is

taught shall learn; but he cannot give Capacity where there is none.

(3.) He can teach Convincingly and Satisfactorily. He can remove all our Doubts, solve all our Objections, scatter all our Darknes. He can let in such a clear and strong Light into the Mind, as shall make us acknowledge our selves overcome by the Evidence of Truth, and suffer our Understandings and Reason to be captivated by the Power thereof.

(4.) He can teach Transformingly, that I may allude to the Apostle's Expressions, *Rom. 12. 2. Be ye transform'd by the renewing of your Mind*; He can by his Teaching not only inform the Understanding, but change and transform the Heart, and frame it to a Love of, and a sincere Resolution to practise the Truths that are taught. He can by his Teaching not only make us understand, believe, and embrace the Truth, but subdue our Hearts, and compel us to yield Obedience thereunto. This may admonish us

1. To be wholly dependant on the Teaching of the Holy Ghost, whensoever we wait upon the Ordinances of God; to be still looking up for his Teaching,

The Second Sermon.

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Teaching, without which we shall in vain expect to profit by the Teachings of Men, how well qualified soever they may seem to be to instruct us.

2. Thankfully to acknowledge his Teaching whensoever we receive any Benefit by God's Holy Ordinances. Are our Understandings at any Time further enlighten'd than they were before? Have we clearer Apprehensions, more distinct Conceptions, or a firmer Belief of any Truth? Doth it make deeper Impressions on us, and more powerfully work upon our Hearts than ever? Let us in all this with humble Thankfulness acknowledge the Instructions of the Holy Ghost: he it is that teacheth us to profit.

3. Whensoever we give our Attendance on the Ordinances of God, to hearken unto what he shall speak, and to receive the Law from his Mouth, let our chief Care be, that our Souls be duly prepar'd and disposed for the Teachings of the Holy Ghost. Now our Preparation for this lies principally in these three Things.

1. In an humble Sense of our Ignorance, and great need of his Instructions.

2. A thorough Willingness, and unfeign'd

feign'd Desire to be taught by him. And withal a Readiness of Mind to receive whatever Truths he shall impart to us, how contrary soever to our former Apprehensions.

3. A real and full Purpose of Heart to practise according to our Knowledge, and to live up to those Truths which shall be made known to us. If we could ever bring these holy Dispositions along with us, when we come hither to wait on God in the Way of his Ordinances, we should then find what 'tis to have the Holy Ghost for our Teacher: we should have that sensible Experience of his Teachings, which now we are Strangers unto. How often do we now hear, and go away as we came, without the least Sense of any Benefit receiv'd by the Ordinance of God! But did we always come with our Hearts so prepared for the Instructions of the holy Ghost, we should scarce ever go away from the Ordinance, without some considerable Advantage thereby.

So I pass to the last Thing, the third Capacity, under which the Holy Ghost was promised to be sent. The Father would send him to be to them a Remem-

membrancer: *He shall bring all things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*: And this also did not only concern the Apostles, tho' them in a special manner, but us also. This Office he faithfully perform'd, by minding them upon all Occasions of what Christ had taught them, but they had forgotten; many Instances whereof we have in Scripture, which I may not at present enlarge on. As for us, the Holy Ghost is also sent to be our Remembrancer; and our own Experience may bear witness, that he is not wanting to us in this part of his Office. We may observe, that tho' our Memories be slippery, and we quickly lose what we have heard or read: Tho' the Truth of God seem to come in at one Ear, and go out at the other, as we say; tho' many times we can afterwards hardly give any Account at all of what we have heard or read; yet we find that the Spirit of God helps our Infirmities, suggesting upon Occasions, and bringing to our Minds those Truths, which we most stand in need of, in Time of Trouble, or in the Hour of Temptation, when they are most seasonable, and when we could not have wanted
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the help of them in the relieving, supporting, and holding-up our Souls, that were just ready to sink. To have such a Remembrancer to help us in our extream Necessities, to cast in upon occasion seasonable Truths, that were quite out of Mind, and to assist us when our Wants most loudly called for Help and Assistance; how great and inestimable a Privilege is this! You who labour under the natural and incurable Infirmary of weak and unfaithful Memories, who complain you lose every thing as fast as you hear it, be not dis-hearten'd: This Remembrancer will abundantly make up all your Defects. If Truths be brought to your Minds when you need them, what can you desire more? He that hath but from Hand to Mouth, is in a good Condition, if he never want Bread when Nature calls for it; tho' he hath it not in Store before-hand, yet if he have what is sufficient in due Season, hath he any Reason to complain? This is your Case: Your Memory is weak and narrow, it cannot lay up much in Store before-hand; but if your Remembrancer, the Holy Ghost, be pleased to supply your Wants, and to give you in Truths in due Season, Is
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not this as well as if you had Plenty of Provisions lying by you?

But yet here let no Man abuse this Truth: Let not this make any Man Careless. If a Man should now think to cast all upon the Holy Ghost, and because he hath a Remembrancer, make account to be supply'd without his own Endeavours, such a one must know, that tho' the Holy Ghost be ready to help our Infirmities, yet he will not cherish and encourage our Sloth. As therefore you hope, and expect to be helped by your Remembrancer, so be sure you neglect not to use your best Endeavour to Remember what most concerns you. In order to this,

1. Carefully attend unto, and heed what you hear.

2. Labour after a clear and distinct Understanding of what you hear; for that's a great help to Memory.

3. Be much affected with it; that's another special help; what much affects, that sticks by us, and is not easily forgotten.

4. Charge your Memories with it; lay your Command upon them to retain, and faithfully to treasure up such and such things, in which you apprehend

hend your self to be most nearly concern'd.

5. Call your Memory to Account afterwards, and make Enquiry how carefully it hath kept those things which it was charged with.

6. Be earnest with God in Prayer, that he would be pleased to strengthen your Memory, and enable it to retain what is committed to it. And if notwithstanding all this you still find, that your Memory proves unfaithful to you, then may you confidently expect and rely on the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, to bring to your Remembrance, most pertinently and seasonably, those useful and necessary Truths which you have forgotten, whensoever the present Condition and Exigencies of your Soul shall be such, as that the actual Thoughts and Presence of those Truths, will be of special Use and Advantage to you.

SERMON III.

John xvii. Ver. 3.

This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

THESE few Words contain the Sum and Abridgment of the Gospel; for they represent to us the only true Way and Means for attaining everlasting Happiness, and that is the main Scope and Design of the Gospel. That we may rightly understand this Portion of Scripture, these things are to be noted.

1. That those words, *This is eternal Life*, must not be here taken in a formal, but a causal Sense; for to know God, and Jesus Christ, is not formally and properly eternal Life, so as if the very Nature and Essence of eternal Life did consist

consist in the Knowledge of God and Christ; but 'tis the Cause of eternal Life, or the Way and Means for the attaining of it. 'Tis as it were the Clue, by which we are conducted and led to Heaven. In the same causal Sense it is, that our Saviour must be understood when he saith, *Joh. 11. 25. I am the Resurrection*: that is, I am the efficient Cause of the Resurrection, or I am he that Raiseth the Dead.

2. That whereas it follows in the Text, *That they might know thee*, or to know thee the only true God, we may not understand those words exclusively in relation to Christ, as if the Father only were here affirm'd to be the true God, and as if the Son were excluded from having any Share in that Honour; but the words must be taken and understood ἀπὸ τῆ κοινῆ, as they say, in a common Sense, with Relation to both Persons; so that 'tis as much as if our Saviour had said, this is Life Eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, the only true God: So that as the Knowledge, which is here said to be eternal Life, is to be referr'd both to the Father and the Son, as the Object thereof, and to

to be understood as taking in both Persons, so the Knowledge of that Object as the true God, must be alike referr'd to both Persons also.

And if it be here demanded, how then it can be said of the Father, that he is the only true God; when the Son also is the true God? And how it can be said of the Son that he is the only true God, when the Father also is the true God? The Answer is not difficult. Tho' the Father and the Son be two distinct Persons, yet they are one, and the same in Nature and Essence; and so though each Person be the only true God, yet as to the Essence, there is but one true God. Wherefore the *Arians*, who deny the Divinity of the Son, and the *Macedonians*, who deny the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, have grossly perverted this Scripture, making use of it for the Confirmation of their respective Heresies. If the Father, saith the *Arian*, be the only true God, then the Son is not God: And if the Father be the only true God, saith the *Macedonian*, then the Holy Ghost is not God. But if these Hereticks had consider'd the Form of Speech that is used in this Scripture, they might easily have discern'd how they

they have abused and wrested it. For the Text saith not, that the Father only is the true God; that indeed had excluded both the Son, and the Holy Ghost from being God; and so this Scripture had been full to the Purpose for which they alledge it; but it saith that the Father is the only true God. Now there is a manifest and wide Difference between these two Propositions, the Father only is the true God, and the Father is the only true God. When therefore it is said, that the Father is the only true God, those Words, the only true God, cannot be conceiv'd to exclude the Son and the Holy Ghost, who are essentially one God with the Father; but thereby all false and fictitious Gods are excluded; those heathen Gods which had only the Name, but not the Nature of God.

Furthermore, for the fuller Confirmation of what hath been said, namely, that the Knowledge which is here said to be eternal Life, must be alike extended to the Father and the Son, so as that the Son must be known and acknowledged, to be the only true God, as well as the Father, we have that plain and express Scripture, 1 *Joh.* 5. 20. which
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is a clear Comment upon this Text:
*We know that the Son of God is come, and
hath given us an Understanding that we
may know him that is true: and we are in
him that is true, even in his Son Jesus
Christ. This is the true God, and eternal
Life.*

3. Another Thing to be noted for
the right Understanding of this Scrip-
ture, is, that the Knowledge of God
the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ,
which is here said to be eternal Life, is
not any kind of Knowledge, but such a
Knowledge, as is accompany'd and join'd
with Faith; and that Faith such, so
lively and operative, as is evermore at-
tended with good Works; with an un-
feign'd Desire, and conscientious En-
deavour in all things to please God.
'Tis not a Knowledge that lies in a bare
speculative Assent; for such a Know-
ledge of God the Father and of Christ,
many attain to, who die in their Sins, and
everlastingly perish. *This is Life eter-
nal*, so to know God and Christ as to
believe and obey. So the Word Know-
ledge, with relation to Christ is used,
*If. 53. 11. By his Knowledge shall my
righteous Servant justify many.* Such
a Knowledge as implies Faith and
Holiness. F The

The Third Sermon.

The Words thus explained, acquaint us with the singular Excellency, and great Advantage and Usefulness of the Knowledge of God, and of Christ; of both which, I purpose to treat, in the order in which they are placed in the Text.

I begin with the Knowledge of God. In handling of which Subject, I shall

- I. Speak something of the Knowledge of God in general.
- II. Of his Being and Existence.
- III. Of his Nature and Attributes.

And as I proceed, I shall all along make such Reflections and Applications, as the Particulars to be treated of require, and as may be most proper and pertinent to the Matters that fall under Consideration. Concerning the Knowledge of God in general, I shall premise several Things.

I. That all our Knowledge of God, both here and hereafter, is imperfect: that is, we can never attain to know God fully and adequately as he is in himself. God is infinite and incomprehensible; and our Understandings are finite; and therefore they can take in
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but little of his immense and boundless Essence and Perfections. *Canst thou by searching find out God, saith Zophar? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Job 11. 7, 8, 9.* It must be an infinite Understanding, that is capable of an exact and comprehensive Knowledge of God. God himself, and none but God, can perfectly understand his own Nature and Perfections. 'Tis true, our Faculties will be much heighten'd, and our Capacities enlarg'd when we come to Heaven, and we shall then be able to understand much more of God, than here we can do: And the Angels, being more excellent Creatures, may apprehend more of him, than Man will ever be able to attain to; but even those blessed Spirits, being Creatures also as well as Men, cannot possibly be capable of the perfect Knowledge of an infinite Being; nay, the highest Measures of Knowledge, which their noble and excellent Natures can reach unto, are infinitely short of God's unmeasurable Perfections; and how much more short

of his Excellencies will Man's Knowledge be, even when it shall hereafter be raised to the highest Pitch attainable by him! Hence we may learn several Things.

1. In all our Search and Enquiry after God, in all our Endeavours after the Knowledge of him, to be ever mindful of the infinite Distance, that is between God and us; of the infinite Immensity of his Nature, and the finite Scantness and Narrowness of our Understandings. This will make us apply our selves to the use of those Means, which are necessary for the attaining of the Knowledge of God, with Humility, and a due Sense of our Weakness, Darkness and Blindness; and with earnest Prayer to God to enlighten and teach us, without which we shall never attain to a sound and saving Knowledge of him.

2. We may hence learn to rest satisfied with those Measures of the Knowledge of God, which he hath made us capable of; and which he hath furnish'd us with proper Helps and Means for attaining; and not to attempt to pry into those Things concerning God, which he hath not thought fit to reveal unto us. This would be such a
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rash and bold Presumption, as might justly provoke God to give us up to the Delusions of Satan, and the wild Fancies, and erroneous Conceits of our own dark and foolish Hearts.

3. It may teach us to think soberly of our selves, after our deepest search into the Nature of God, and our highest intellectual Attainments; for as much as he that knoweth most of God, must needs be ignorant of much more than he knows. We know not our selves, we know nothing exactly and perfectly; not the meanest and most contemptible Creature; not that which we think we know best. He that should have spent the most considerable Part of his Time, in making Enquiry into the Structure and Composition of his own Body, would never be able to attain an exact Knowledge of the Whole, and all the Parts of it, shall I say? Nay, not of the Structure of the smallest Fibre; how much less could he ever attain the perfect Knowledge of the Nature, Powers, Faculties, and Operations of his Soul. But why do I instance in the Frame and Composure of the Body of Man, which is so rare and admirable, that every rational Being, who looks

into it and considers it, will stand amaz'd at it, and with an holy Astonishment, cry out with the Psalmist, *Pf. 139.*

14. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. To give therefore a meaner Instance, he that should have spent all his Days in Searching into the Composure of the least Fly, would never be able exactly to Anatomize it, and give a perfect and satisfactory Account of all the Parts of which that little Creature is made up and compounded. Oh then what shallow, weak, dark Creatures are we, when we apply our Understandings to look into the Nature of the infinite and incomprehensible God!

2. Tho' we cannot attain to know God perfectly, yet that imperfect Knowledge of God which we are capable of, is to be highly valued, to be earnestly desired and sought after. We must not sullenly and slothfully sit down and acquiesce in our Ignorance of God, as if it were not worth the while to endeavour to know any thing concerning him, because we can never arrive at an adequate Knowledge of him. This were,

1. A proud Contempt of the Knowledge of God.

2. It

2. It were also most horrid and odious Ingratitude not to accept, make use of, and improve those Means of attaining some Knowledge of God, which he hath graciously bestow'd upon us. How much the Knowledge of God, such as our Weakness can attain to, is to be prized, and how earnestly 'tis to be endeavour'd after, we shall better understand, if we consider,

1. That of all the Creatures which God hath made, they are only Angels and Men that are endued with Reason, and capable of knowing God. As for the rest of the Creatures, they are either utterly void of all manner of Knowledge, or their Knowledge is of an inferior Nature, and conversant about inferior Objects; and those Objects are very few, and lie within a narrow compass, being for the most part such as concern their Food, Sustenance, and Preservation from Dangers; and yet even in these things oftentimes they are rather led by natural Instinct, than Knowledge. But as for the Knowledge of God, the very inanimate and senseless Creatures, the Earth, the Stones, and Minerals, are not more void of this Knowledge, than the noblest Creatures

in the World, which are not endued with the Faculty of Reason. Therefore Man, that should be destitute of this Knowledge, and Ignorant of God, would fall from the high State and Dignity of his Nature, and become like the Beasts that perish.

2. God is the chief Object of Man's Knowledge; and God hath endued him with the sublime and excellent Faculty of Reason and Understanding, that he might know his Creator, that he might understand and admire his Excellencies and Perfections, and give him the Glory of them.

3. Without the Knowledge of God a Man can never answer the End of his Creation. For God created Man that he might worship, serve, obey, and honour his Creator; and this a Man can never do that is destitute of the Knowledge of God. Hence it is that the Scripture ordinarily attributes all the Irreligion, Wickedness, Profaness, and Ungodliness of Men, to the want of the Knowledge of God. So 1 Sam.

2. 12. *The Sons of Eli were Sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord:* So Hof.

4. 1, 2. *There is no Mercy, nor Truth, nor Knowledge of God in the Land; by*
Swear-

Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing they break out, and Blood toucheth Blood. And then more expressly, v. 6. all this Excess of Wickedness, all those horrid Sins, together with all the Miseries attending them, are ascrib'd and imputed to their Ignorance of God. *My People is destroyed for want of Knowledge;* that is, principally for want of the Knowledge of God, which the Prophet had mentioned before. Wherefore *David*, when he would provoke *Solomon* to the Service of God, begins with the Knowledge of him. *And thou Solomon, my Son, know the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind.* 1 Chron. 28. 9.

4. If a Man be destitute of the Knowledge of God, he can never be Happy, either here or hereafter.

1. He can never live happily or comfortably here. For whereas there is no Man, that in this Life meets not with many Troubles and Afflictions, where can he have Support and true Consolation but in God? What is there in all the World, that can ease and relieve him, quiet and compose his Spirit, support and uphold his Heart, but the Consideration of the Wisdom, Power, Goodness,

The Third Sermon.

ness, Truth and Faithfulness of God? But if a Man be ignorant of God, how can he have recourse to him for Succour in his Troubles? How can he comfort and encourage himself in him? How can he rest and stay up himself on him?

2. Neither can a Man, without the Knowledge of God, be happy hereafter. For if it be eternal Life to know God and Christ, then what is it to be destitute of the Knowledge of him? Such Persons may see the fearful State that awaits them in the other World, *2 Thess.*

1. 7, 8, 9. *The Lord Jesus Christ shall be reveal'd from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.*

3. Though it highly concerns all Men, whom God hath made capable, to labour after the Knowledge of God, yet the same Degree of Knowledge is not required of all.

1. There is a Difference between Men's natural Parts and Capacities of Knowledge. Some to whom God hath given *Largeness of Heart*, as 'tis said he
gave

gave Solomon, *1 Kings* 4. 29. can take in much ; others who but have narrower Hearts, and weaker Intellectuals, little.

2. As Men are of different natural Parts, so their Opportunities and Advantages for attaining Knowledge are different. And accordingly where God hath endued any Persons with better Parts, and external Advantages, there he expects greater Measures of Knowledge ; and less where Parts are weak, and where there are not the like Means afforded for the Attainment of it.

But you will say, what if Men have both Parts and Opportunities for attaining Knowledge, but do not improve them?

Ans. Then their Ignorance is utterly inexcusable. There is a Twofold inexcusable Ignorance.

1. A wilful and affected Ignorance, when Men will not know God, when they purposely shun and decline the Knowledge of him, and of their Duty to him, that the Neglect of the Performance of their Duty may be so much the more excusable. But these People will find that they have been mistaken. Affected Ignorance shall neither excuse them in whole, nor in part ; shall neither
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ther totally absolve them from Guilt, nor abate or lessen the Punishment of it; nay, rather this will exceedingly aggravate their Sin, that having Means of Knowledge, they refused to make use of them, and chose to be ignorant of God and their Duty, because they had a Mind to continue in Sin.

2. There is a supine and careless Ignorance, when Men having Means of Knowledge, care not to make use of them. And this may proceed from several Causes.

1. From pure Sloth and Laziness, because they will not be at the Pains to get Knowledge.

2. From a dis-regard and light Esteem of Knowledge, and of all Heavenly Things. They value them not, and so they mind them not, they look not after them.

3. From extream Earthly-mindedness, and an inordinate Love of the World. Their Hearts are set upon, immerst in, and even swallow'd up by the World, and so there is no room for the Things of Heaven. But all these Persons, when they shall be call'd to an Account for the Neglect of their Duty, will have nothing to plead for their Excuse. They
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may think they shall have enough to say for themselves: they wanted Knowledge, and they were poor ignorant Souls; they had little acquaintance with heavenly Things, and what could be expected from them? But whose Fault was that? Was it not their own? Had not God endued them with natural Parts, whereby they were capable of Knowledge? Had they not moreover Opportunities and Means afforded them for attaining Knowledge: Were they not often call'd upon to make use of those Means? Was not God also ready to afford them his Help and Assistance, if they would but have used their Endeavour? Was not the Excellency of heavenly Things, and the high Concernment of their Souls everlasting Happiness, often laid before them? Were they not often Warn'd of the Danger of continuing in Ignorance, notwithstanding such Means of Knowledge? Were they not often told, that seeing they might have gain'd Knowledge, but would not look after it, their Ignorance would be no Excuse, when they should appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, to receive their final Sentence? Consider this all ye that *despise Instruction,*

struction, and hate Knowledge, as Wisdom complains, Prov. 1. 22. All ye that love Darkness rather than Light, as our Saviour speaks, Job 3. 19. who with that desperately wicked Man, Job 21. 14. say unto God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. But you will say, do not many Persons of rare Gifts, and excellent Knowledge, everlastingly miscarry? What then doth their Knowledge avail them?

Answ. 'Tis true, many knowing Men, many that in their Times have been deservedly admired for their Eminency in Knowledge and Learning; nay, who have been Eminent, not only in other kinds of Knowledge, but in the Knowledge of God and heavenly Things, have gone to Hell and Perish'd with all their Accomplishments. But this must not be imputed to their Knowledge. 'Tis not the Knowledge of God and of heavenly Things that destroys Men, and ruins their Souls, but either their not improving their excellent Knowledge, or their abusing it.

1. Their not improving their Knowledge, for the reforming and regulating of their Lives, and conforming them to the Will of God. 'Tis not the
Light

Light that mis-leads them to Hell and Destruction, but their rebelling against the Light, in *Job's* Language, *Job* 24. 13. *Their holding the Truth in Unrighteousness*, as did the *Gentiles*, *Rom.* 1. 18. and not glorifying God by a Conversation suitable to that Knowledge of God which he bestowed on them. Thus by Accident only, and no otherwise, their Knowledge heightens their Sin, and consequently increaseth their Judgment.

2. Their abusing of their Knowledge ruins them, and not their Knowledge. Their abusing of their Knowledge to the Dishonour of God, the Author and Giver thereof; which may be done,

1. By perverse Reasonings and Disputings against the Truth.

2. By pleading for Sin, and justifying the ungodly Practices and Courses of the World.

3. By scoffing at Religion, and deriding the Ways of God.

4. By maintaining or abetting any unrighteous Cause, to the Oppressing of the Innocent, or the Turning of a Man aside from his Right. These, and other the like foul Abuses of Knowledge, are not the proper Effects of Knowledge it self, but of the Wickedness of Men's
Hearts,

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Hearts, in mis-employing Knowledge, to those Ends and Purposes, for which God never endued Men with it. Besides, the Knowledge which such Men have, is of a different kind from that which good Men are furnish'd with. 'Tis not a truly spiritual and sanctify'd Knowledge; 'tis not that which *Solomon* calls *sound Wisdom*, *He layeth up sound Wisdom for the Righteous*, *Prov. 2. 7.* This kind of Knowledge is evermore an humbling, heart-purifying, and life-reforming Knowledge. This is the Knowledge of God, and of heavenly Things, which the holy Scriptures so highly magnify, and so much recommend to us, and of which, such great and excellent Things are spoken. This is that *which is more precious than Rubies, and all the Things which a Man can desire, are not to be compar'd with it. The Merchandise thereof is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the Gain thereof, than the Gain of fine Gold. Prov. 3. 14, 15.* This is that *which cannot be valued with the Gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx, or the Sapphire. The Gold and Chrystal cannot equal it, nor the Topaz of Ethiopia, as the inestimable Worth, and Excellency of it is set forth, Job 28. 16, 17, 18,*

18, 19. Would you know how you may attain so rich and invaluable a Treasure?

1. Pray much for it.

2. Be willing to take much Pains in the Pursuit of it. Both these Means, Solomon, who well knew what belongs to Wisdom, hath directed us to, *Prov.*

2. 3, 4, 5. *If thou criest for Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding; If thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasures; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.*

3. Be careful to add conscientious Practice to your Knowledge. *If any Man will do God's Will, he shall know it, Joh. 7. 17.* Hereupon 'tis that David urgeth his Resolution, to put in practice what he shall learn, as an Argument to prevail with God to teach him. *Teach me, O Lord, the Way of thy Statutes, and I shall keep it unto the End: Give me Understanding and I shall keep thy Law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole Heart. Ps.*

119. 33, 34. Doth your Heart bear you Witness, that you desire that God would give you Knowledge, that you may understand and perform your Duty? Be assur'd of it, you cannot be so willing to learn as God is to teach you.

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4. Make use of your Knowledge as Opportunity offers it self, for the Benefit and Edification of others, that may stand in need of your Help that Way. *Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have Abundance, Matth. 25. 29.* that hath to use and employ for his Master's Advantage, for that is the meaning of that Place. In this Sense, as well as otherways, we may take that of Solomon, *Prov. 11. 25. The liberal Soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself:* And that of the Apostle, *2 Cor. 9. 6. He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* If you understand it of Sowing spiritual Seed, the Apostle's Words will there also warrant you to expect from God, an Harvest proportionable to your Sowing.

5. As for such as are natural Idiots, and in that respect incapable of the Knowledge of God, we must leave them to the secret Counsel of God; who alone knows what he hath determin'd concerning them; only thus much he hath declared, that *unto whom little is given, of them the less shall be requir'd, Luk. 12. 48.* and that God takes it not well at our Hands, to be counted a hard Master, *that reapeth where he hath not sowed, and gather-*

gathereth where he hath not strew'd, Matth. 23. 24. For, according to these Declarations, we are well assur'd how he will deal with them in the general; though as to the Particulars of what he intends concerning them, we are wholly Ignorant, he having not any further revealed his Pleasure concerning them. And what God hath not judg'd fit to reveal, that it becomes not us to be curiously prying into. *Secret Things belong unto the Lord our God, but those Things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our Children, that we may do them. Dent. 29. 29.*

These Things being thus premised, concerning the Knowledge of God in general; I now come, in the second Place, to speak of the Being and Existence of God, which was the next Thing propounded to be spoken to.

But here perhaps it will be objected, That to prove that there is a God, seems to be a needless and unprofitable Work. This great Principle, you will say, we all Believe; and therefore it will be but Labour lost, and so much Time mis-spent, to endeavour to prove that which none of us denies.

Ans. To this I Answer, That to prove there is a God, is not so needless

an Undertaking, as some may apprehend it to be. For,

1. The wretched and desperate Irreligion, Profaness, and Atheism of the Age in which we live, hath made it necessary to prove the very Fundamentals of Religion. For what Truth is there which the Wickedness, and Licentiousness of our Times hath not call'd in question; yea, Disputed against, and Deny'd? Heretofore we took it for granted, that the Souls of Men were Immortal; that there are such Places as Heaven and Hell, that there are Rewards and Punishments awaiting Men in the other World, accordingly as they shall have demean'd themselves here; that there is a most Wise, Powerful, All-seeing, Just and Righteous God, to whom all Men must be Accountable for their Thoughts, Words, and Actions. But all these great, important and weighty Truths are now disputed and gainsaid. There is a Generation of Men, that seems to have crept out of Hell, who bid open Defiance to whatever is Sacred; who set their Mouths against Heaven, and laugh at the Notions of God and Eternity; who make the great fundamental Truths of our
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Religion to be no better than Fables, invented to abuse and keep in awe Men of easy Belief, that take up Things on trust, and never examine them to the bottom: In a Word, who censure all those for credulous Fools that are not of their Mind, and as very Atheists as themselves. Now tho' I hope there may be few or none of this Strain amongst us here in this Place, yet where can a Man live, where he shall not sometimes meet with Men of these Principles, and be assaulted by them? In this debauch'd Age, in which Satan seems to have broken his Chain, and to be at liberty to sow and disperse the Seeds of Atheism throughout this Kingdom, who can secure himself against Encounters of this nature? Wherefore it concerns us all, if ever it did, to be well Arm'd against the Batteries which may be made against our Faith, by Men of this Atheistical Spirit. It concerns us to be able to give a Reason of the Hope that is in us, that we be not baffled, and laughed out of our Religion, by Men who are of no Religion, but avow'd and profess'd Enemies to God and Goodness; by Men who profess to live by no other Principle, but that of

pleasing Themselves, and gratifying their Lusts.

2. The firm Belief of the Existence of God, is the Foundation on which all Religion is built and rests; take away this Foundation, and you thereby remove all Religion; and whatever doth but attempt the shaking and weakning of this Foundation, thereby attempts the undermining and blowing-up of all Religion together with it. How much therefore doth it concern us to have our Hearts so thoroughly settled and establish'd in the Belief of the Existence of God, that nothing which we meet with may shake it!

3. There is no Man so confirm'd and establish'd in Faith, that hath not still some Remainders of Unbelief and Atheism in his Heart. The Seeds of Atheism are in every Man by Nature since the Fall; and they can never be totally destroyed as long as we live in this World. 'Tis only Death that perfectly frees us from them. If any Man be so well perswaded of himself, as to think he hath no Strings of this bitter Root still remaining in him, he is deceiv'd. Whosoever shall thoroughly study his own Heart, and carefully observe the Workings of it,

it, will find that his natural Atheism, tho' it works privily within him, and so may easily be over-look'd, discovers it self several Ways. I shall give a few Instances hereof.

1. When a Man hath at any Time discoursed with Persons of atheistical Opinions, and heard what they have to say for themselves, and what they oppose against the Truth; or when he hath lighted upon any profane Book, where such Things are vented; he may observe, that tho' he abhors the Things which he hears or reads, yet they make such Impressions upon his Heart, that he cannot easily be rid of them. Something of the Poison of such Discourses insinuates it self, and for some Time after sticks by him. How often do some of those wicked Reasonings come to his Mind, and run in his Thoughts, and haunt him tho' he endeavours to dismiss them, and send them away as soon as they come! Now though *Satan* may well be suspected to have a great hand therein, yet there is somewhat else in the Matter. These atheistical Discourses meet with something in the Heart, that makes it too kind and friendly to them, and too ready to listen to them, if not

to entertain and bid them welcome: there is somewhat of natural Atheism in the Heart, that is as Tinder, ready to take Fire at such Discourses: and this *Satan* also knowing very well, is thereby encourag'd to fall in with Discourses of that Nature, to make the utmost Improvement of them, in order to effect the Ruin of the Soul, which he aims at.

2. This bitter Root of Atheism, secretly lurking in the Heart, discovers it self upon occasion of the Difficulty, Sublimity, and unfathomable Depth of some Things in Scripture, reveal'd concerning God: Such as are, the Eternity of God, the Immensity of his Being, the Trinity, or the Doctrine of three Persons in one divine Nature. These Things and the like, tho' clearly reveal'd in the World, being such as our Reason is not able to comprehend, (though it yields its Assent to them, in regard of the Testimony of God revealing them) the Mind often staggers at, and is apt to object, and demur, and question, saying, how can these Things be? And this sometimes riseth yet higher, and so puzzles the Mind, as that it is not able so to extricate it self, but that it is ever and anon apt to doubt whether there be a
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God, whose Nature is so dark and abstruse, and so far above the Reach of human Understanding. For naturally we have that good Opinion of our Reason, that we are ready to question the Reality and Being of that which we find we cannot understand.

3. Another Thing upon occasion whereof the natural Atheism of Men's Hearts discovers it self, is the Difficulty of reconciling God's Providence with what the Scripture reveals concerning his Nature and Attributes, and with those Notions and Apprehensions which we have of him. We observe frequently that Wickedness reigns, triumphs, and carries all before it, while Vertue and Piety are crush'd; that Injustice and Iniquity prevail, while Uprightness and Innocency are oppress'd; that lewd and vicious Men prosper and flourish, while good Men are kept under, and harrassed with Adversity. Now because we cannot presently apprehend how these Things should consist with the Justice and Holiness of God; we find our selves thereby tempted to question his Being or Providence. And this is a clear Argument of the Proneness of our Nature to Atheism, and that we have the
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Seeds and Principles of it within us. Upon these Considerations I presume I may take it for granted, that there is no Man so firmly perswaded of the Being of God, but that still he stands in need of further Establishment therein. Now if Enquiry be here made, from whence the Arguments, by which the Being of God is to be proved, must be fetch'd, whether from Scripture, or from Reason; I answer, that in treating of this Subject, especially if a Man have to do with Atheists, who deny the Existence of God, we are necessitated to make use of, and insist on Arguments drawn from Reason. For the Atheist, who denies the Being of God, denies the Truth of the Scriptures also. If you press him with Scripture, and endeavour to prove to him that there is a God, because the Scriptures every where speak so much of God, and because 'tis the whole Scope and Design of those sacred Writings, to discover his Will to us, and to lay before us our Duty to him; as also to set up and exalt God, and make known and display his Excellencies; the Atheist presently laughs at you, and tells you, that he believes nothing which the Scriptures affirm concerning
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this matter, and asks you how you prove the Scriptures to be true. If you answer, that they are the Word of God, and consequently of divine Authority, and infallible Certainty, he tells you that you do but beg the question, and first suppose that there is a God, which he flatly denies, and then prove the Truth of the Scriptures, because they are (as you say) the Word of God. He will tell you, that you run round in a Circuit, Proving the Being of God by the Testimony of the Scriptures, and the Truth of the Scriptures by the Testimony of God. But now if it may be proved by the Arguments that are drawn from the Principles of right Reason, that there is a God, this is a kind of Proof, against which he can have no Exception; because in this we take nothing for granted, but what the Atheist himself must, and cannot but allow of: for he acknowledges the Principles of right Reason as well as we do. This I thought needful to be premised, lest any Man should take Offence, that the Being of God should rather be proved from Reason than from Scripture. There is a Necessity, as you see of making use of this Way of Proof, when we have to do with
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those who deny both the Being of God, and the Truth of the Scriptures.

1. Therefore, that there is a God may be proved from that natural Conscience which is in Men, from whence it is that they are quieted, and cheared, and in some Measure comforted when they have done well; but troubled, and disquieted, frightened and terrifyed when they have done ill, especially after the Commission of very great and hainous Crimes. And 'tis here considerable,

2. That Men cannot be rid of the Fears and Terrors, the Twinges and Lashes, which natural Conscience inflicts on them. They cannot reason or dispute them away, they cannot baffle them, they cannot shake them off, they cannot run away from them; but haunt them, follow them, and pursue them, they will. Or if for a short Season, through the Excess of carnal Merriment and Jollity, they may for the present be charmed and laid asleep, yet let them retire a while from those Frolicks and Diversions, and their Consciences will again be awakened, and their Horrors return upon them, and that perhaps with far greater Force and Violence than before.

2. That

2. That these Terrors arrest any Men without Discrimination or Distinction. No Man's Greatness or Superiority exempts him from the severe and impartial Lashes of Conscience, when he hath offended. He whose Rank and Quality in the World is such, that he is not accountable to any Man for what he hath done, and whose Eminency hath set him above the reach of human Judicature, hath a Tribunal within himself, before which he must appear, be arraign'd, strictly and impartially interrogated and examin'd, sentenced and condemned. Yea, he is not only Try'd, found Guilty, and Condemn'd by his own Conscience, but in Effect executed by those inexpressible Horrors, those racking Torments, and heart-breaking Pangs and Convulsions, which are the Harbingers and Earnest of his eternal Punishments.

3. A Man's Conscience reckons with him for those things that are without the Verge of human Laws, and come not under the Cognizance of Authority. Those secret Crimes of which no Proof can be made; those Offences and Immoralities which none but God, and a Man's own Conscience is privy to;

to; those wicked Actions which have been so cunningly contrived, and so closely managed, that there could be no ground for the least Suspicion of any such Guilt; and of the perpetual Concealment whereof, the Actors had the greatest Assurance, and highest Confidence imaginable; yet even in those things a Man's own Conscience finds him out, and is ever racking and tormenting him for them. Tho' he sees no cause to fear, that what he hath done will ever be discover'd; tho' he makes full account, that 'tis buried in everlasting Darkness, so as no mortal Eye shall ever have the View of it; and tho' if it should be discover'd, he fears not the Censure of any Power under Heaven, that may call him to an Account for it, yet he is not satisfy'd; notwithstanding all this he is unquiet and restless; the sense of secret Guilt inseparably attends him, continually haunts and pursues him, incessantly tortures and preys on him, so that he is sometimes a Burthen to himself, and even weary of his Life.

Now these Actings of Conscience, without reference to any human Law, Power, Jurisdiction, or Tribunal, must
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necessarily refer to some Superiour, or rather supreme Being, unto whom every Man naturally apprehends himself to be accountable for his Actions; and who is supposed to have a perfect and exact Knowledge of all our Works, how secret soever; a most severe and unbiass'd Justice, constantly and unchangably disposing and inclining him to do Right, and render to every Man according to his Works; and lastly, an uncontrollable and irresistible Power to inflict due Punishments, according to the Demerits of every Man's Offences. And whereas every Man's Conscience troubles and affrights him more or less, according to the different Measures and Degrees of his Guilt, and the circumstantial Aggravations, or Extenuations thereof, by which it hath been either heighten'd and increased, or lessen'd and qualify'd; what less can this amount unto and signify, than that there are upon the Heart of Man indelible Impressions and Characters of a supreme Being, that weighs all Men's Actions in a just Balance, exactly measuring out and apportioning Punishments, according to the Degree and Quality of every Man's Crimes and Offences?

Offences? And what is this supreme Being, but the same which we call God? For are not these the very Notions which we have of God? And do we under the Name of God apprehend any other Being, than that which hath been now described?

But perhaps you will here reply, that these Workings of Conscience may be only the Effects of deluded Fancy, or groundless Fear, such as in many other things Men are often, without any just Cause, surpriz'd and possess'd with:—and therefore they cannot be of that weight, as to afford a sufficient Argument for the Proof of a Deity.

But 'tis no difficult matter to frame an Answer to this Objection, that may satisfy any Man that is willing to be satisfy'd, and is not one who is resolv'd to quarrel and gainsay. Whereas 'tis objected, that these Workings of the Conscience, these inward Troubles and Horrors, may arise from deluded Fancy, or groundless Fears, I answer,

1. If so, then those Troubles and Horrors would not be so generally found in flagitious and criminal Persons as they are, but in such only as are
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naturally sad and melancholick, or weak and shallow, and in that respect more subject to such irrational Fears, as you suppose these to be. But we may observe, that Persons of the strongest Intellectuals, highest Reason, and soundest Judgment; Men of the most chearful and gay Temper, whose natural Complexion hath been most remote from Melancholy, when they have contracted any horrid Guilt, have been no more exempted from those inward Gripings, and tormenting Fears, than any other Persons whatsoever. It is therefore most apparent, that those Troubles of Conscience cannot be attributed, either to weakness and shallowness of Understanding, making Men terrify and affright themselves with the meer Shadows and Appearances of those Evils, which have no Reality in them, nor to deluded Fancy, or Melancholy.

2. Neither are those flagitious Persons free from such Troubles, who have endeavoured to espouse to themselves all those Principles, that might seem to be of any Force to banish such Fears out of their Hearts, and perfectly deliver them from the Power of them. Let Men do what they can to perswade

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themselves, that there is no God to call them to an Account, no Hell where the wicked shall be tormented, no future Judgment, no Account to be required or given hereafter, of what they have done while they liv'd in this World: Let Men perswade themselves, that whatsoever Reports have been made them, concerning the Immortality of the Soul, and an eternal State of Happiness or Misery after this Life, are but idle Dreams, and childish Fables, meer Scarcrows and Bugbears, which no Man need be more affrighted with, than with a drawn Sword in a Picture, or a painted Flame; let them strengthen and confirm these their Sentiments and Perswasions as much as they please; let them apprehend themselves to have arrived at such a Firmness of Belief concerning the Vanity, Weakness, Irrationality and Nullity of those Grounds of Fear, which others suffer themselves to be kept in awe with, that nothing shall ever be able to shake their Confidence; yet when they have done all they can, they cannot rescue themselves from those Fears. Like a barbed Arrow dipt in Poison, they will stick in them, notwithstanding all the means they can use

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to pull them out ; they will still inflame and torment them, after all the Remedies they have apply'd to assuage the anguish of them.

But here it will be reply'd, That what hath now been said is not universally True. There are some most desperately wicked Persons, who are as Merry and Frolicksom, who live and go on in their ungodly Courses as pleasantly and jollily, as if they were conscious to themselves of no such horrid Guilt, as if there were nothing to burthen and disquiet their Consciences. If these Men's Consciences were so troublesome to them, how could they go on so merrily and smoothly in their Sins as they do?

Ans. 1. Though these Persons are merry and frolick Abroad and in Company, yet they may have, and without all doubt, unless they be desperately harden'd, they have many a secret Lash, many a direful Twinge from their Consciences in their Privacies and Retirements, when they are sequestred from the Affairs and Business, from the Noise and Hurry of the World, and when they are withdrawn from the Diversifements and Merriments, with which

in Company they entertain themselves. When they have nothing to be taken up with but themselves, alas! how many harsh Peals do their Consciences ring them in the Ear! I appeal to them, whether their Consciences have not read them many a severe Lecture at Home, notwithstanding all their merry Frolicks Abroad.

2. If some particular Persons should be so fearfully harden'd in their Sins, and if their Consciences should be so strangely seared, that they can for some Time go on in their wicked Courses without regret, yet

1. There are but very few Instances hereof, 'tis generally far otherwise. The Person who hath arrived at such a Degree of Obduration is rarely to be found: he is a Monster among Men, among the most wicked and profligate Sort of Men.

2. Neither doth this Freedom from the Horrors of Conscience always last. If the Conscience seem to be quiet and silent in time of Prosperity, and as long as no outward Cause of Fear and Disturbance presents it self, yet if any sore Affliction, or heavy Stroke from the Hand of God light on him, if any sudden

den dismal Accident surprize him, if any dreadful Evil be approaching, and especially if Death seem to be drawing nigh, then for the most Part, the sleepy Conscience is awaken'd, and is now as full of Horror as of Guilt.

3. But if it should so be, that some particular Persons, should be for their Sins given up to such a full and final Obduration, as that they should live and die, without any Sense of their Guilt, which yet I believe is such a Thing as never was, I speak now of Persons guilty of notorious Crimes, yet cannot one or two, or a few Instances be of any Force to invalidate or weaken the Truth of what hath been said.

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SERMON IV.

John xvii. Ver. 3.

This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

II. A Second Argument to Prove the Existence of God, may be the Universal Consent of all Nations and Ages in this Principle. *Nulla gens est neque tam immansueta, neque tam fera*, saith the Orator, There is no Nation so savage and barbarous, which doth not acknowledge there is a God. And so the Moralist to the same Purpose. What Difference soever there is between several Nations in other things, yet they all agree in this, that they own some supreme Being, whom they make the Object of their Adoration and Worship.

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The parts of the World formerly known, and those more lately discover'd, consent and accord in this Principle. All of them have something or other which they substitute in the Room of God, and worship as God, tho' they are ignorant of the true God. The various Superstitions and Idolatries of the Nations of the World, are a clear Demonstration that they all believe there is a God, tho' groping after him in the dark, they set up and adore the Creature instead of the Creator. And so likewise, tho' they most grossly and foully Err, concerning the Way and Manner after which he is to be Worshipped, yet that there is a supreme Being, to whom divine Adoration is due, even the superstitious Fopperies of their erroneous and false Worship, prove them to acknowledge. Neither may this be judg'd an Argument of little Strength for evincing that there is a God. The concurrent Judgment and Opinion of any considerable Number of wise and learned Men concerning any Thing, is an Argument carrying so much Probability in it, that it ought not to be slighted; how much more the concurrent Verdict of the far greater Part of all wise and learned Men,
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that ever were in what Place or Age of the World soever ; and yet how much more again ought to be attributed to the universal Consent of all Men, learned and unlearned of all Ages and Parts of the World ! Surely that Man had need have a strange Measure of Confidence in his own Judgment, and very clear, strong, and impregnable Arguments to ground his Opinion upon, that shall oppose himself against the concurrent Judgment and common Sentiments of all Mankind.

But the Force of this Argument to prove the Existence of God, will appear to be the greater and more considerable, if these three or four Things be well consider'd.

1. That the wisest Men, the greatest Masters of Reason, and those who have made the most exact Enquiry and deepest Search into the Nature and hidden Causes of Things, have been most firmly established and settled in the Belief of a Deity. Some Novices and Smatterers in Philosophy may sometimes have been wavering ; but such as have look'd further into Things, and search'd to the Bottom, such as have attained the greatest Measure of sound Knowledge

ledge in other Things, have been most strongly perswaded of the Being of God, and most steadily adhered to that Principle.

2. That the more Just, Sober, and Temperate, the more Virtuous and Unblameable any have been, and the greater Strength they have attained, to govern themselves, to master their Affections, suppress the Exorbitances of their Passions, and to frame their Conversations according to the Dictates of right Reason, the clearer Apprehensions, and the more stedfast and unshaken Belief of a Deity have they had: As for Atheists, who denied, or rather have desired and endeavoured to deny the Being of God, they have been for the most Part those whose Interest it was that there should be none; they have been mostly such Persons, whose vicious and profligate Conversation hath prompted them to wish there might be none to call them to an Account.

3. That Men have then been most of this Mind, their Perswasions of the Being of God have then been most full, and their Convictions thereof most clear, effectual, active, and vigorous, when they might be supposed to have been
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been best able to judge ; as when some great Affliction hath threaten'd them, or actually seized on and arrested them ; under some great Anguish or tormenting Pains ; or in the near Approaches of Death ; at such times the Acknowledgment of a Deity hath been extorted even from those who have , at other times, Derided and Scoffed at the Notion of a God. Now when can we conceive Men to have been wisest, and best able to pass a right Judgment on things, but when some grievous Affliction, or the Apprehensions of Death approaching, have made them serious and considerative, teachable and tractable ; and clear'd the Eyes of their Understanding, by divesting them of whatsoever might have had before any influence upon the darkning of their Minds. We may generally observe that all Men, if not given up to a reprobate Mind, or depriv'd of the use of Reason, or under the Power of Temptation, are wisest, and best able to judge aright of Things in their Afflictions, and when they come to Die. O then how do they wonder at their former Errors, and Misapprehensions of Things ! How do they then Befool themselves, that they should
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have had so high an Esteem of those Things, which now they evidently perceive had never any true Value in them ! And on the other side, with what Indignation do they now reflect upon their Folly, in judging those Things to be vile, worthless and contemptible, which now they see would stand them in more stead than all the World, and of the true Worth and Excellency whereof they are now clearly convinced !

4. It is moreover considerable, that there can no other probable Account be given of the Cause or Ground of these Perswasions of a Deity upon the Soul of Man, than that they are from God, the Author of our Being, who hath thus left Impressions of his own Image upon Man, that he might know to whom he owes his Being, and to whom, upon that Account, all the Homage and Service he is capable of performing, are due. To say that these Notions of the Deity, in the Minds of Men, are only an Effect of the Craft and Policy of the great Rulers of the World, of Princes and States-men, who, the better to keep their Inferiours in awe, and to make them more awfully
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Regardful of their Superiours, and Obedient to their Laws and Injunctions, have subtilly instill'd the Perswasions of a Deity into their Minds ; is what hath not the least Shew, or Appearance of Reason. For if the Notion of a Deity, in the Minds of Men, were only an Effect of the Craft and Policy of Governours, thus endeavouring to put a Cheat upon their Inferiours, that they might thereby awe them into Subjection ; how comes it to pass, that the greatest Potentates of the World, who have most kept their Inferiours in awe, and even made the Earth to tremble before them, have been Themselves possess'd with the Fear and Dread of a Deity ? How comes it to pass that They, reflecting upon the Wickedness and enormity of their Lives, the Bloodshed, Rapine, Violence, Oppression, and other vicious Practices, which they have been guilty of, have had Experience of the same Disquiet, and Horrors of Conscience, which their Inferiours are subject to upon the like Occasions. If they knew they did but cheat and delude their Inferiours, in perswading them that there is a God ; certainly, there could be no Reason why they Them-
selves

selves should be afraid of that which they knew to be a Cheat, a meer Politick Device, to put others into a causeless Fright? Who will think he need be afraid of the Bugbear, which he himself hath devised and framed to abuse the Simplicity, Credulity, and Fearfulness of other Men?

Neither is it more likely, nor hath it any fairer Probability, that Men's natural Fearfulness of what may hurt them, and their Aptness to Fancy and create Grounds of Fear where none are, should make them entertain the groundless Notion of a Deity if there be none; for the Fancies of fearful and timorous People are various and widely different from one another. One imagines this to be a just Ground of Fear, and another that; and as nothing is more irregular, disorderly, and extravagant in its working than Fancy; so the grounds of Fear, which Men create to themselves, and afflict themselves with, are as manifold and various as the workings of their Imaginations are. It being so, whence is it that the Fancies of all Mankind should agree upon the Notion of a Deity, to fright themselves with, if indeed there be no other Deity,

Deity, than what is groundlessly fram'd in their own Minds? It were very strange, if there be nothing but natural Fearfulness, and deluded Fancy in it, that all Men's Imaginations should pitch upon the same Object? That all Men should naturally fear and fancy a Deity, if there be none. Wherefore it remains that we conclude as before, that the only true and satisfactory Account of the Cause of the Notions of a Deity in the Minds of Men, is, that God, the Author of our Being, hath so framed Man, that he hath as it were ingraven his own Image upon him, and left Impressions of Himself upon his Soul. From these Impressions it is, that Men naturally apprehend there is a God; and withal, apprehending him to be Just and Powerful, armed with irresistible and impartial Righteousness, to take Vengeance of Men's Offences, that they, having Offended, naturally stand in Awe of him.

And so I should have done with this Second Argument to prove the Being of God, but that one Objection remains to be answer'd. Whereas it hath been said, that the Consent of all Nations,
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and indeed of Mankind concerning a Deity, proves the Existence of God; the Atheist steps forth and denies this universal Consent. Lo here is one, saith he, that never assented thereunto. I am he that deny the Existence of God, and therefore what's become of your universal Consent? You talk of the engraving of the Notion of a God upon the Hearts of all Men, but lo here is a Heart upon which this your Principle was never engrav'd.

To this I might perhaps reply, that when it is said, that the Consent of all Nations confirms the Existence of God, and that this Principle is engrav'd upon the Hearts of all Men, natural Fools and mad Men are to be excepted; and sure I am that a Man who so daringly and presumptuously sets his Mouth against Heaven and affronts God, is little better than Mad or Foolish. Certainly if he were *Compos Mentis*, he would never do it. It was the saying of an Heathen, *Esse deos qui negat, vix eum sana mentis existimem*; I can hardly think him to be in his right Mind that denies the Existence of God. But not to insist on this answer; to the Objection I reply,

1. That

1. That tho' it should happen, that some Persons may have so far debauch'd their Reason, as that no Foot-steps or Impressions of a Deity were now to be found upon their Souls, yet it doth not thence follow, that there never were any such Impressions there. Let me ask the most obstinate and harden'd Atheist, that now defies the Being and Providence of God, and glories in it, was he always of this Mind, even from his Childhood? Can he not remember the Time, when he had the same Impressions of a God upon his Heart, which other Men have? Did he easily rid himself of the Apprehensions, and Dread of a Deity? Did he not with much Difficulty, and after many Conflicts with himself, and after much Violence offer'd to his Reason, attain that Hardiness which he now boasts of? Did he find it an easy Work to obliterate the Characters, and extinguish the Notion of God in his Soul? If a Man should, by a long Course of Sin, have extinguish'd natural Affection in himself, as some have made a shift to do, by their long accustoming and inuring themselves to Bloodshed, Cruelty, and all Kinds of barbarous Immanities and

Outrages, doth it thence follow, that he never had natural Affection, and that God never planted any such Thing in the Soul of Man. Impudent, Shameless, and most wretchedly ungrateful Atheist, you have done what you could to raze out of your Soul the Impressions of a Deity, of that God that gave you your Being, and Preserves you, and at length you give out as if you had effectually done it; and now you say, there were never any such Impressions upon your Soul.

2. I further add, that what the Atheist pretends to, is but a vain Boast. While with his Mouth he vapours and glories that he believes there is no God, his Heart gives his Tongue the Lie. Let him do his utmost to raze the Impressions of a God out of his Heart, he will never be able to effect it, nor consequently to deliver himself from that dread of a Deity, which Men of such atheistical Principles are haunted with. Wherefore even the heathen Philosopher was bold to say, *Mentiuntur qui dicunt se non sentire esse Deum; nam etsi tibi affirmant interdum, noctu tamen & sibi dubitant.* They Lie who say they believe there is no God. If it be not so, then tell me
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what's the Reason that none are more afraid to die than professed Atheists ; that none are surpriz'd with greater Horror and Consternation of Spirit when the Time draws near that they must go hence, that none go out of the World with greater dread and trembling than these Men do. Tell me why the Thought, and the very mention of Death is so unacceptable to these Men. Is it not because their own Consciences tell them, that Death is no other than a Sergeant or Officer to arrest them, and cause them to appear before that God, whom with their black Tongues they have Reproach'd, Blasphem'd and Deny'd ? If they did indeed verily believe there is no God, and had no doubt in themselves concerning this Matter, as they pretend they have not ; if they were really and constantly of this Mind and Perswasion, that there is none to call them to an Account after Death, why should they so much startle at Death, and with such Dread shrink away from and decline it ? Since, according to their Principles, it puts an End to all their Miseries, and only leaves them in that Condition in which they were before they had any Being,

that is, reduceth them, at least as to their Souls, their better and more noble Part, into that first Nothing out of which they came. And so much concerning this Argument to prove the Being of God.

3. The Existence of God may be further proved from the necessity of supposing such a first most wise and powerful Being, to give Existence to all other Things. He that denies God, can never be able to give any rational Account how this World, and all the Things therein contain'd, came to have their Being.

1. Shall any Man say that the World made it self? that were impossible, as implying an unavoidable and flat Contradiction. For

1. That which makes it self, and gives a Being to it self, must necessarily be supposed to have been before it self; for how else should it give Being to it self? And if this World were before it self, then it was when as yet it was not; a plainer Contradiction, and groffer Absurdity than which, there cannot be.

2. If this World gave Being to it self, then it must also be suppos'd to have had Vertue, Power, and Activity before

fore it was in Being, and when it was yet meer Nothing. But 'tis a most undeniable Maxim which carries its own Light in it, that, *Non entis nulla sunt accidentia*; that which is not can have no Accidents belonging to it, and therefore is not capable of being the Subject of any Vertue, Power, or Activity.

Shall we say, with the Epicurean; that Particles of Matter, Dancing and Playing up and down in an empty Space before the World was, at length by Chance so met together, and closed with one another, that they compounded and made up this World, which now our Eyes behold, and all the Variety of Bodies comprehended in it? This is so wild a Fancy, that the very Mention thereof is a sufficient Confutation of it. A Man would think he must be beside himself that could entertain such an absurd and irrational Conceit. For

1. Who, that is not forsaken of his Reason, can ever believe that such a goodly Structure, such a beautiful and admirable Frame as that of this World, should owe its Beginning and Being to Chance; and that those little Particles of Matter casually Frisking and Playing, at length by Chance were so united to,

and inclosed in one another, as that the glorious Body of the Heavens enlightned with Sun, Moon, and Stars, and the vast Globe of the Earth, with the exquisite Furniture of all the Variety of Bodies belonging to it, were the Effect and Product thereof? He must be blinder than Chance or Fortune it self, who ascribes such wonderful Effects to Chance, and who doth not discover in the Frame of this World, the plain and legible Characters of a most wise and powerful Being, who is the first Cause and Original of all these Things, which with so much Admiration and Astonishment we behold and contemplate.

2. But if so absurd a Thing, and so contrary to all Reason should be granted; if the casual Concourse of those little Parts of Matter, might be suppos'd to be a probable Account of the Beginning of this World, and of the Original of all Things contain'd in it; yet whence at first came those little Parts of Matter, and what gave them their Being and Activity, and first put them into Motion. Surely Matter could not make it self; nor, being of it self a dull and unactive Thing, could it give it self Motion when made. Wherefore our Reason
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son could never rest in this supposed Matter, crumbled into little Pieces as the Original and first Cause of the World; but must of Necessity go forth to make a further Search, and never would rest till it could find out some higher and more noble Principle, some first Cause to which all other Things stand indebted for their Being; and a Cause of such Excellency and Perfection, that the Original of all other Things in the World, and of the World it self, might rationally be ascribed unto it, and deriv'd from it: and this Cause what is it else, or what else can it be, but the same which we call God?

3. Shall we say this World, as now we see it in the whole Frame and Composition of it, and in all Parts of which it consists and is made up, was from Eternity? Shall we say there was from Eternity the same Succession of Generations and Corruptions, the same successive Changes and Alterations, some Things still perishing or ceasing to be what they were, and other Things starting up and coming in their Room.

1. But how can our Reason be ever satisfied herewith, when we observe one Man to have descended from another,

ther, and him from another, and him again from another, and so upward still, how can our Minds be satisfy'd, and our Reason acquiesce, until we come so high as to pitch upon some first Cause and universal Principle of Being, that gives Being to all other Things? A continual Progress from Effects to Causes *in infinitum*; an uninterrupted Succession of one Being after another, rising infinitely higher and higher, without any first Rise from whence all future Successions are deriv'd, and on which they depend, is that which our Reason cannot accord with, or be reconcil'd unto. Wherefore Philosophers in all their Enquiries and Disputes have ever avoided, declined, and rejected a *Processus in infinitum*, an endless or rather a beginningless Progress, if I may so speak, in the Way of Succession of one Thing after another, or in the Way of causal Dependence of one Thing upon another, and look'd upon it as absurd, irrational, and impossible.

2. If the World were from Eternity how came it to pass that some Parts of the World should so long remain uninhabited? Was not Eternity a Tract of Duration long enough to have Peopled all
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all the World, and all the Parts and Regions of it, though it had been Ten Thousand Times more spacious than it is?

3. How came Arts and Sciences, and many other most useful Inventions, as Printing, the Use of the Compass in Navigation, and the like, to have been so long hid from the World? In the vast and boundless Tract of Eternity, can it be imagined that the Wit of Men should not have found out and discover'd, whatever could be of any Use or real Advantage to Mankind?

4. If the World, and the Parts thereof, in that Order and Succession of Things, which we now behold, was from Eternity, then one of the highest Perfections, that any Being is capable of, would agree to the whole Mass of the World, and all the main and substantial Parts thereof. Eternity is one of the greatest Excellencies imaginable; and yet, according to this fond Dream of the Eternity of the World, this transcendent Perfection would agree, not only to the inanimate Body of the Heavens, but even to the Air, Water, Fire, and to the dull and senseless Body of the Earth, to Stones and Metals, and
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to whatsoever almost is most Base and Ignoble in this inferiour World.

5. The Frame, Order, and admirable Harmony of the World; the Dependance of the Parts thereof on one another, with their mutual Subserviency and Usefulness, are another Argument evincing that there is a God. That the immense and glorious Body of the Heavens should be so framed and contrived, so disposed of and placed, so moved and turned about, as to afford its Light, and dispense its Influences to all the Parts and Climates of this lower World: that the various Motions of those heavenly Bodies should be so regular and orderly; that upon the constant and never-failing Access and Recess, Approaches and Withdrawings of the Sun, and the diurnal Revolutions thereof, Day and Night, Winter and Summer, Spring and Autumn, Seed-time and Harvest, should take their Turns, and observe their Seasons and Vicissitudes. That for the Space of almost Six Thousand Years, these Things should still go on in an uniform and uninterrupted Course: that the Earth being chear'd and refresh'd, cherish'd and warm'd by the Influences of those Celestial

lestial Bodies, and water'd with the Dews of Heaven, and seasonable Rains and Showers from above, should bring forth all manner of Vegetables and Fruits, for the Sustainance of Man and Beast; and that the Sea should also afford its Assistance, and out of its rich Treasury furnish the Earth with Supplies of what it wants, and so contribute towards the accommodating of Mankind with a great Variety of those Things, which might not only be for the Supply of his Necessities, but his Delight; that one Region of the World should furnish another with what it hath not of its own, and by a reciprocal Exchange, and grateful Return, be again furnish'd and supply'd from thence with what it stands in Need of it self; these Things, and many other of like Nature, are they not the visible Effects of that infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, which we ascribe to God? Could any other Being, but such a one as we apprehend God is, be the wonderful Contriver of these things? Did these things put Themselves into this admirable Order? Or did they light upon it, and fall into it by Chance? Who, but a Mad-man, could entertain
so

so wild and senseless an Imagination?

6. If we descend to particular Bodies, and take a View of the several Parts of the World, we shall see still much more to convince us of the Being of God, and to lead us to the Acknowledgment of him. I shall instance in some of those many Things, that might be produc'd, and pass by the rest.

1. If I should here speak of those great Works of Nature, or rather of the Author and God of Nature, Thunder and Lightning, terrible Tempests and Whirlwinds, Earthquakes, and Rain, and Snow, and Hail, and Frost, what wonderful Things are all these, if thoroughly look'd into and consider'd, tho' the frequency of them hath made them so familiar to us, that we are not much affected with them! And so that the massy and ponderous Body of the Earth, being placed at an equal distance from the Heavens every way, should, as it were, hang in the Air, having nothing to sustain it, but being only poiz'd with its own weight: And that the Heavens should, by their unwearied and perpetual Motion, ride in a Circuit about the Earth, and compass it every Day, since the one and the other had a
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Being, without Cessation or Intermission; how great a Work must it appear to be to any Man, that shall take it into his serious Consideration; and how convincing an Argument, that there is a supreme, most wise and powerful Being, that hath made these things, and given such Laws to them, as that they cannot but keep their Stations, and remain where the Author of their Being hath placed them, and go on in that Course he hath appointed for them! But there are two Things, which I shall here more especially take Notice of; Namely, The stupendous Greatness of the Heavens, and the incredible Swiftmess of their Motion. As for the Greatness of the Heavens, we may give a guess at it, by comparing them with the Earth. The Earth is a vast Body; the Compass of it Round, according to Geographers, is 21600 Miles. But now, what's the whole Globe of the Earth in Comparison of the Heavens, but as it were a Point! The vast Disproportion and Difference between the Quantity, or Bulk of these two Bodies, we may thus in some measure apprehend. The Body of the Sun, as little as it seems to be in our Sight, is, according

according to the Calculation of Learned Mathematicians, above a Hundred and Threescore Times as Big as the whole Globe of the Earth: and as for the ordinary Stars in the Eighth Sphere, some of them (I mean those of the first Magnitude) are, according to the Computation of Learned Men, found to be above an Hundred Times as Big as the whole Body of the Earth. Now then, if One of those Stars be above an Hundred Times as Big as the vast Body of the Earth, which is 21600 Miles in Compass? What is then the whole Body of the Heavens! Certainly that Star cannot bear so much Proportion to the whole Body of the Heavens, as a little Tennis-Ball doth to the huge Globe of the Earth! Wherefore, if one of those Stars be above an Hundred Times as Big as the Earth, how many Thousand Thousand Times as Big as the Earth, must the vast Body of the Heavens be!

2. As for the Swiftnes of the Motions of the Heavens, or of the Stars in the Heavens, if you suppose the Heavens to be a fluid Body, as some do, and the Stars to move therein as Fish in Water, or Birds in the Air; I say as for the
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Swiftnefs of their Motion, we may make some Judgment of it from what hath been said. Supposing the Earth, as hath been said, to be 21600 Miles in Circumference or Compass, if we should suppose it to move round, as *Copernicus* and his Followers hold it doth, in 24 Hours, it must move 900 Miles in an Hour. But now the Body of the Heavens being so vastly bigger than the Earth, how many thousand Miles must their Motion finish in the Space of an Hour, to turn about as we suppose and take for granted, that it doth in four and twenty Hours ! There can be no doubt but that according to these Hypotheses or Suppositions it must move some Thousand of Miles every Minute of an Hour. A Motion of most stupendous and almost incredible Swiftnefs. If any Man should here say that the Computations of Mathematicians are uncertain and erroneous ; I grant it is not possible by any Helps or Advantages of Art, to take the exact Measures of these Things ; but that 'tis not impossible learned Mathematicians may come somewhat near the Matter, we may be induc'd to believe if from nothing else, yet from their exact Computations of the Eclipses of Sun
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and Moon, many Years before these Eclipses happen. And their exactness therein is well known to be such, that they can foretell both the very Minute when those Eclipses shall be, how long they shall continue, and what Proportion or Part of the Sun or Moon shall be eclipsed, to the least Scruple. But I have too long insisted on this abstruse and perplexed Argument. In short, the result of what I have said is this; the Body of the Heavens being of that vast Greatness, and the Motion thereof, or of the Stars therein, of that stupendous and almost incredible Swiftnefs, how effectual should the Contemplation hereof be, not only to convince us of the Existence of an infinite Being, from whom these wonderful Things are deriv'd; but to fill us with an holy Admiration, and humble Adoration of his inconceivable Power, Wisdom and Goodness. These Things among many others consider'd, well might the Psalmist say, *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work.* Ps. 19. 1.

But I shall enlarge no further concerning the Evidence, which the Heavens afford, towards proving that there is a
God,

God, a first Being, of infinite Perfection, the Cause of all other Beings; and therefore I pass on to take Notice of several Particulars in divers natural Things here below, which may contribute very much to the Confirmation of what hath been spoken, and to our further Establishment in the Belief of a Deity. And they are these that follow.

1. The wonderful Production of natural Things, both Vegetables, as Herbs, Plants, and Trees; and Animals, or Things endued with Sense as well as Life.

1. For Vegetables, how strange a Thing is it, that the little Seeds of Herbs and Shrubs which seem to be dead, dry, and utterly void of any Principle of Life, being Sown or Set, and Cherish'd a while in the Earth, should as it were revive, put forth, and spring up; and that, tho' some of those Seeds be but as a Grain of Mustard-seed, they should in a short Space grow up to that Height, that, as our Saviour speaks, *the Birds of the Air may build their Nests in them!* That of a little Kernel should come a tall and vast Tree; that of a small Acorn should arise a huge Oak! Whence is this, but from some most

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wise and powerful Cause, that in Order to the Propagation of natural Things in their several Kinds, hath put a vital Principle, a Principle of Life and Vegetation into those little Seeds?

2. As for Animals, or Things endu'd with Sense, what's more admirable in Nature, than what we behold with our Eyes continually almost, but because 'tis common and ordinary, we scarce wonder at, and admire it at all? That out of an Egg kept warm and cherish'd under the Bird for a few Weeks, should come forth a living and perfect Creature, most exquisitely and curiously wrought and fram'd in all the natural Parts, Lineaments, and Proportions that are due to its Kind, and endu'd with Life, Sense, and Motion, and acted by a sensitive Soul, that preserves it in Life, gives it Activity, superintends and governs it. And as much Wonder is there in the Production of all other sensitive Beings.

But above all, most wonderful and never-sufficiently admired is, that noble Artifice, that rare and exquisite Piece of Workmanship, the Conception and Forming a Child in the Womb of the Mother: wherein, after some Months, a
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curious Structure is compleated, a Palace is prepared and made ready for the Reception and Entertainment of an immortal Soul; and an Instrument in all respects accurately adapted and fitted for that excellent Being to work in and act by. And oh! the admirable Composure, and rare Contrivance of that little Body! But of this more afterwards under another Head: For the present this may suffice, to convince us of the Existence of a God of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, who drew the Scheme, and laid the Foundation of this excellent Edifice, and raised the Walls, and beautify'd it with all those Ornaments and Embellishments, that super-add so much Grace and Lustre to it. Can any Man that doth not wink hard, or wilfully put out his Eyes, ever imagine that these things come so to fall out by Chance, or blind Fate? In any sober and rational Man's Enquiry after the true Cause of such wonderful Effects, is it possible that he should ever light on any thing to satisfy him, till he rise as high as a God, and resolve all into infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness?

2. As the Production of Natural Things, so the Provision that is made

for the Sustainance of Animals, or living Creatures, is an Argument of a supernatural Providence, and by Consequence of a God. I speak not in this place of Mankind; for Men being endued with Reason, may be supposed perhaps, by their own Providence and Forecast, and by those Means and Artifices which Reason suggests to them, to be able to make a better Shift for themselves, than Brutes that are destitute of the Faculty of Reason. Wherefore, to confine my Speech to irrational Beings, it may be observ'd, that tho' setting aside some very few of them, they never Lay-in before-hand, or provide for the Time to come, yet they seldom want what is sufficient for their daily Sustainance. 'Tis but rarely found that any of them Die purely for want of Meat, unless when they are restrain'd and shut in so as that they are not at Liberty to look out for their Sustainance. Your Birds of Prey, and wild Beasts, that live upon other living Creatures, tho' they know not where, or on what they shall next satisfy their Hunger, yet fail not to light on something or other to answer the Importunity of their craving Appetites, relieve Nature, and keep them
alive;

alive; yea, to lengthen out the Lives of some of them, as Naturalists report, to the Extent of some Hundreds of Years. And the like Provision is made for other Beasts and Birds, and creeping Things, and Fishes. And here two Things more, as to this matter, are very considerable.

1. That tho' the natural Temper, Completion and Constitution of Animals be widely different from one another, upon which Account it is, that the same Food cannot suit them all, but what is good Nourishment to one, may be as bad as Poison to another; yet there is Provision of a natural, proper and agreeable Food for them all, and all the several Kinds of them; and that sort of Food that is fit for them, and suitable to their Constitution, they seldom, or never fail to meet with, somewhere or other, as Nature calls for it, and Need requires. Who, that shall consider this, can choose but acknowledge a supernatural and divine Providence therein. I am not now urging Scripture but Reason, for evincing that there is a God: but what I have last said, is most agreeable to what the Holy Scriptures speak concerning this

Matter. *He gives to the Beast his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry to him.*

Psal. 147. 9. So likewise, speaking of the innumerable living Creatures in the Sea, the Psalmist saith, These wait all upon thee, thou givest them their Meat in due season; that thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine Hand, they are filled with good. Psal. 104. 27, 28. To the same Purpose is that of our Saviour, Mat. 6. 26: Behold the Fowls of the Air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

2. Another Thing very considerable in this Matter is, that Birds and Beasts are by the Frame of their Bodies fitted to get their Food in that Way in which it is provided for them. So Hawks and other Birds of Prey, have crooked and strong Bills, great and strong Talons, Legs and Thighs, and are nimble wing'd, and swift of Flight, that they may pursue their Prey more speedily, and having seized on it, may retain it more strongly, kill it, rend and tear it more easily. The like may be said for the Teeth and Paws of Lions and Bears, and other wild Beasts. So the Grey-Hound, the better and more nimbly to follow

follow after, and overtake his Game, hath a slender Body, and long Legs; and a long Stern for the more speedy and easy winding about and turning its Body, as there is occasion in the Pursuit of the Hare. And to give no more Instances, so, the Swan, Crane, and such Birds, as must search deep into the Water for drawing up their Food, for the more Conveniency thereof, are accommodated with long Necks. Now let the Atheist say, whether he indeed believes that these things by good Fortune happen'd so to be. No Man can hinder him from enjoying his Opinion, if he be resolv'd to keep it, notwithstanding all that may be said to the contrary: but I think any sober and rational Man, that is well in his Wits, would rather conclude, that undoubtedly there must be a God, whose most wise Providence hath thus on purpose framed these Beasts and Birds, and furnish'd them with Bodies fit for the Uses he intended they should make of them. And so much concerning the Provision, that is made for the Sustenance of living Things.

3. The great and marvellous Variety of Natural Things, is another Thing

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that may lead us to the Acknowledgment of a God, and confirm us in our Belief thereof. As for Vegetables, *viz.* Herbs, Plants, and Trees, they are so many as that large Volumes have been written concerning them ; and so likewise concerning Birds, Beasts, creeping Things, and Fishes. And tho' there be so great Variety in the known Parts of the World, yet still other Parts of the World have been newly discover'd, so as it were a new World of Creatures, never known before, have been brought to our Knowledge. Whence 'tis rational to conclude, that as a very great Part of the World hath never yet been discover'd, so there are also in those unknown Parts, many more Vegetables and Animals of several Kinds, than we have hitherto been acquainted with. Now in this wonderful Variety of Natural Things, we may further to our Purpose observe,

1. That the Composure, Shapes, Nature, Vertues, and Properties of Things, are as manifold and as different from one another as their Species, Kinds, or Sorts are. 'Tis true, some Things of different Kinds come near to, and much resemble one another ; but yet still they differ

differ even in what they come nearest to an Agreement in; and in many other thing besides. And so 'tis for their Vertues and Properties. There may be divers things of different Kinds or Species, that have the same Vertue and Properties; but then, either they have them not in the same degree; or they are mix'd and complicated with some other things of another Nature, so as the same Combination and Complication of several Vertues and Properties, in the same measure and degree, is not to be found in any Two things whatsoever, that are not of the same Kind or Species.

2. Another Thing observable is, that Things of the same Species or Kind, are all alike as to the main, excepting some small accidental Differences, and those for the most part arising from the difference of the Air, Soil, or some other such like circumstantial Diversity. Now what hath been said of Vegetables, the same is also as true of living Creatures. Birds, and Beasts, and creeping Things, and Fishes, that are of the same Species, have all the same Shape, Figure, Lineaments, the same Structure, Frame, and Composition of Parts, even to the least Bone,

Bone, or smallest Vessel in the whole Body ; as also the same Nature and Properties, the same way of feeding, and of bringing forth, and rearing up their Young, the same ways of securing themselves against Danger, and the like. And so those of a different Species are accordingly as different in most, or at least in many of the fore-mention'd Particulars.

But you will say, what is all this to the Matter in Hand? What do these Things contribute towards the Conviction of Men, concerning the Existence of a God? I answer, very much.

For 1st. This marvellous Variety of natural Things necessarily supposeth, and clearly evinceth that there is a Being of infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, that hath made all these Things, put these distinct Natures, Vertues, and Properties into them, and assign'd and set to every Species, the Bounds and Limits of its Perfections.

And 2^{dly}, Whereas those of the same Species are all alike, as to all the Particulars before mention'd, so as the least Seed puts forth, buds and sprouts in the same Manner, proper and peculiar to its Kind ; not only the Stalk, but the
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the Leaves and the Flowers, both as to Colour, and every Part being alike; what else doth this import and signify to us, but that these Laws of Nature, as I may call them, are as it were imposed upon them by Him, who hath made them and given them their Being. He it is that hath thus determined, limited and confined their Natures, so as every Species keeps within its own Bounds, growing, and acting, and operating like it self. A most wonderful and amazing Thing, that there should be in every little Seed such a Principle of Life and Growth, as never fails to produce Stalks and Branches, and Leaves, and Flowers, and Blossoms, where any are, of the same Kind, Make and Frame, in Ten Thousand Instances. Can the Wisdom and Art of all Men in the World, make one of those little Seeds, and endue it with such a Vertue and Property? The like might be said of living Creatures; but I forbear to enlarge any further on this Argument. He that duly ponders these Things must acknowledge a God, who is the Author and first Cause of these wonderful Effects, or he must for ever be at a Loss, and sit down puzzl'd and confounded with them.

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Wherefore let us see God in these natural Things, and in Admiration of his Power and Wisdom cry out with the *Psalmist, Ps. 104. 24. O Lord how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches.*

4. The admirable Beauty, Lustre, and Splendor of many natural Things, as well Vegetables as Animals, is another Thing that leads our Reason to some most powerful and wise Being, that is the Cause to which these Things owe their Original. What rare Beauty is there in Flowers, the Tulip, Emony, Carnation, and many Others, of whose natural Lustre and Ornaments, we may say as our Saviour doth of the Lilies, *Matth. 6. 29. That even Solomon, in all his Glory, was not array'd like one of these.* How convincing an Argument doth the inimitable Beauty of the Peacock, whereof mention is made *Job 39. 13.* to which we may add that of the Pheasant, and other like Birds, furnish us with for the Proof of a Deity, if these three Things be well consider'd!

1. The natural Freshness and Liveliness of those Colours, such as no Art could ever set forth, express or represent
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to the Eye, with like Advantage, for Affecting and Gratifying that Sense.

2. The most pleasant and delightful Variety and Order of those Colours, which are so exactly distributed, so curiously and exquisitely set and dispos'd, as if the Painter's Art and Pencil had done it, and not Nature.

3. And Principally, that of all this pleasant Variety and exquisite Order, no other Account can be given, but that 'tis the Nature of those Things thus to grow, and with these natural Beauties to adorn themselves. And what more wonderful than this, that the Plants, that are adorn'd with those beautiful Flowers, should derive all their Nourishment from the same black Earth that feeds a stinking Weed; and that the Flowers should be more immediately fed and nourish'd by the same Juice in the Stalk, which there is uniform and like it self, promising no such Variety as perfectly appears when 'tis drawn up into the Flower: where that raw green Juice is perfectly diversify'd and improv'd into all that Variety and Beauty which our Eyes behold. So what more strange, and more worthy of our Admiration, than that the very same Nourishment

ishment, that feeds the Black Flesh of the Peacock, being transmitted, and as it were strain'd through the Quill, should also beautify and adorn the Feathers with such delectable Variety of Colours and Embroideries, as surpass all the Art of the Painter?

Now as for this Account hereof before-mention'd, that it is the Nature of these Things thus to be; that is indeed most true, but it gives a Man small Satisfaction, unless he rise higher, and from Nature ascend to the God and Author of Nature. For, who was it that at first put such Principles into them, and endued them with such Vertues and Properties? Who gave those Laws to their Nature, which they so regularly and constantly observe? Must it not be some wise and powerful Being, the very same which we call God? Surely the rare Beauty and Lustre, the Order and Constancy of such admirable Variety evidently demonstrates, that it could not always fall out so to be meerly by Chance, but by the Contrivance and Designment, the Direction and Government of one, who, as the Prophet speaks *Isa. 28. 29. Is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in Working.*

S E R M O N

SERMON V.

John xvii. Ver. 3.

*This is Life eternal, that they
might know thee the only
true God, and Jesus Christ
whom thou hast sent.*

V. **A** Nother Argument, which
may give further Evidence
of the Existence of God, is
the Consideration of the
natural, and strange, and most useful
Instincts that are in some Animals, I
mean in Things endu'd with Sense, but
void of Reason.

Man indeed being endu'd with the
most noble and excellent Faculty of
Reason, can by the Help of Discourse,
foresee and provide against Dangers,
find out Ways and Methods for relieving
himself in Straits and Exigencies, and
cast about and contrive how to furnish
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and supply himself with what he wants. But as for other Animals, that, being destitute of the Advantages which Reason affords, have nothing but Sense to help them to steer their Course, and provide for their Safety and Subsistence, these are many Times at a Loss, and would be oftner, if they had not those natural Instincts or Impressions, which, in many Cases, serve instead of Reason to direct and govern them; and to prompt and thrust them forward to do those Things that are needful, in order to the Preservation of Themselves and their Young. These Instincts are various, and might be so enlarged on, that a great deal of Time would be taken up in pursuing this Subject. But I shall content my self to have given some few Instances. And I shall begin with that natural Instinct by which the Young of such Animals as are furnish'd with Milk, are by Nature led and carried to seek after that Nourishment which is provided, and in a Readiness for them, as soon as ever they come to breath in the common Air. This Instinct indeed is common to the Young of Mankind and brute Beasts, but in the Brutes 'tis in some Respects more remarkable. 'Tis most
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most certain that 'tis not either in the one or in the other, from any Knowledge they have of the Provision that Nature hath made for them, or of the Suitableness and Agreeableness of that kind of Nourishment, to their natural Constitution, that they are carried after it, but purely by Instinct; that is, to speak more plainly, by the meer Force, Impulse, or Inclinations of their Nature, which disposes and thrusts them forward to such kind of Actions. That they cannot so act from a Principle of Knowledge is evident; for whence should they have this Knowledge, or what Capacity have they of it? But this will be more apparent, and be better understood, if we shall a little more particularly consider this Matter. That young Animals, when they are now deprived of that Way and Kind of Nourishment, which they were fed and sustain'd by, when they were united to the Bodies of their Mothers, should now have a Sense of some Want and Defect, is not in the least to be wonder'd at; and Nature being in Want, and feeling it self to be so, the Desire or Appetite after some Supply is natural. But now, that they should look out after

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Supply in this Way, and be able to know how to make use of that means, with so much Readiness and Dexterity, by which their Wants may be supply'd, these are the Things which can be attributed to nothing else, as the immediate Principle thereof, but the peculiar Instincts of Nature. To speak a Word or Two to both these.

1. 'Tis very wonderful to consider, that young Things that are to be fed by Milk, (I now speak of Brutes) are no sooner come into the World, but they naturally apply themselves to that Part of the Dam, where 'tis to be had; and which is very strange, even those Animals who come into the World blind, will do it. Not from any Knowledge that they have that Milk is there prepared for them, but from the very Instinct of Nature, carrying them thither, and prompting them to apply their Mouths to that Place where that Food is to be had.

2. As natural Instinct leads them to that Part, so they draw the Dug or Breast naturally. This we see in little Infants as soon as they are born; tho' they cannot apply themselves to that Part as Brutes will, yet being by the Nurse

Nurse or Mother apply'd to it, they immediately (if well and healthy) draw it naturally, and that with the greatest Skill and Dexterity. And whence hath this little new-born Babe learnt this Art? Surely it was never taught it in the Womb. The very Instinct of Nature, and nothing else, fram'd and dispos'd it thereunto. Now if you farther demand, whence this natural Instinct is, and how these young Things came by it, no other satisfactory Answer can be given but this: The same most wise and powerful Being, that is the Author of Nature, put these Instincts into natural Things; the God of Nature made such Impressions upon them, as might effectually and unerringly lead them to that which was provided for their Sustainance, and likewise teach them how to make use of it.

I may here challenge all the Atheists in the World to give any other satisfactory Account hereof. If they will not open their Eyes, and see a most wise God, that hath infused these Instincts into Things, they must know that the Time is coming, when they shall be forc'd to open them, and to keep them open also; when the horrid

Guilt of their Sin, in denying the Being of him, who gave them their own, shall be continually in their View; when their Eyes shall be so steddily held to, and fix'd on the Amazing and Soul-confounding Spectacle of their Sin, as that they shall not be able to look away from it, to give themselves the least Diverfisement, or obtain the least Mitigation or Intermiffion of the unexpressible Horror and Anguish of their Minds, by turning their Eyes towards any other Object. So I pass on to speak of some other strange and wonderful Instincts, observable in Animals, but such as we are all likewise so well acquainted with, that we admire them the less. I may not insist too much upon all particular Instances, but will run them over as briefly as I can, and the rather in regard I have been so large in pursuing the first Instance. A Second shall be the Instinct from which Birds act, or rather are acted in building their Nests.

1. How do these Animals know when the Time is now at Hand, when they shall need a convenient Place to lay their Eggs, and entertain their Young? Whence have they this wise Forecast and Exactness of Providence, as ordinarily
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to begin to build their Nests, and to carry on that Work, so as it shall be finish'd and compleated, just about the very Season when they are to make use of them? Whence have they learn'd to time the building of their Nests so exactly? And then again,

2. As for the Frame of their Nests, the Materials they make use of, and the Manner of setting them together: How strange is it that every Species or Sort of Birds, should build their Nests after the same Manner, in one and the same Form, and of the same Materials; and how is it that those Materials are so inlaid in one another, and so fastly and firmly complicated, compacted, and joined together, that 'tis no easy Matter to pull the Parts asunder? Whence is it, that after courser Materials laid, as the Foundation of their Building, they compleat their Work at last with finer and softer Materials, and such as are most fit to keep their Eggs warm, and to make a Warm and Easy Bed for their Young? And,

3. Whence is it, that both Male and Female contribute towards the more speedy and seasonable perfecting of this Building? Whence is it, that with so

much Content, Delight, and incessant Industry, they are at work betimes in the Morning, and carrying it on with unwearied Diligence throughout the whole Day, excepting only that Time which is necessary for gathering their Food?

4. Who hath taught these wise and provident Animals the Art of building their Nests, so exactly and uniformly, just as those of that kind are wont to build; without any Variation in a Thousand Instances? How strange is it, that even those Birds which never built a Nest before, should be able to do it as exactly and artificially as if they had served a seven Years Apprenticeship at the Trade? In all this, who that is not resolved to be blind, that doth not wilfully shut his Eyes against the Light, can chuse but discern and behold the Reason of a most wise Being, clearly shining forth, who hath put these natural Instincts into those Animals, for the Propagation and Preservation of their Kind? Who can possibly give any other good Account of their acting so regularly and uniformly, so constantly and unerringly like themselves, and the rest of their own kind; and so fitly and suitably,

suitably, in reference to the End for which they act ; I say, who can possibly give any other good Account hereof, than that they have both their Beings, and these natural Instincts and Impressions from One, who is of infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Perfection ; who is Good to all, even to these irrational Creatures, and *whose tender Mercy is over all his Works*, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Pf. 145. 9.*

Hereunto we may add, the Female's sitting-abroad on her Eggs for three Weeks together, or a Month ; who hath taught her to punish her self voluntarily by so long a Confinement, and even half to famish her self, rather than suffer the Work she is about to miscarry ? Who hath taught her to make such hast to her Nest again, when the Necessities of Nature send her abroad to refresh her self a little, and recruit her declining Strength by that Food which she can soonest light on ? And in some Kinds of Birds, who hath taught the Male that Kindness and Providence, as to keep the Eggs warm while the Female is abroad to seek after her Food ?

Furthermore add yet to all this, that *supernatural*, or natural Affection, that is in

these Animals to their Young? With what incessant Diligence, and unwearied Industry, with what Joy and Complacency do they from Day to Day seek out and bring home to them that Food, which is most proper for them? And how do they half starve themselves for that Season, that their Young may not want? And lastly, how tender are they of them? How careful and solicitous of their Safety, and how ready to interpose themselves between them and Danger, tho' to the hazard of their own Lives. Whence have they all this, but from a Supreme Being, a most wise, good, and powerful Agent, who hath given them their Being, and hath put these natural Instincts into them? Thus they act, and cannot do otherwise, because he who hath made them, hath set them in this Course, and hath imposed these Laws upon them. They do it because 'tis their Nature, and their Nature 'tis, because one who is infinite in Wisdom and Goodness, was the Author of that Nature; one who could do nothing, but what shou'd hold an exact and perfect Correspondence with his own Wisdom and Goodness, with the Ends and Uses for which 'tis done.

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I make no question, but that there may be some here present who may laugh at these Things, because they are of a familiar and ordinary Nature; but let such take heed how they make sport with the Footsteps of divine Wisdom and Goodness, shining forth in the meanest and most contemptible of his Creatures, and his most common and ordinary Providences; let them rather with holy Reverence, adore that supreme and most excellent Being, who thus is pleased to make Discoveries of himself; of his own most adorable Excellencies and Perfections, even in the Things which we daily and hourly converse with; and which we have before our Eyes continually, but that we are naturally so blind, stupid, and sottish, as that we take little Notice of them; or so sensual, and immers'd in these Things here below, that we cannot get off our Hearts and Eyes from them; we cannot look above them, or be rais'd to the Acknowledgment and Contemplation of that divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness, which they so clearly hold forth, and present to the View of any Man, who hath his Eyes open to see them.

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To these natural Instincts, might be added many more. Who hath taught the Hare, and the Fox, and other Animals, when Pursued by their Enemies, to make such strange Shifts to save themselves; to delude the Pursuer, to retard his Progress after them, and to make the Enemy run forward and backward, this way and that way, the better to gain Time and Ground? How came all those, that are of the same Kind, to make use of the same Shifts, to fall into them so readily and exactly, tho' they were never Pursued before; to know all the Arts and Subtilties of Relieving themselves so perfectly well, as if they had long Practiced them, and run a Thousand Courses for their Lives? So again, when Animals have taken any Hurt, or lighted on any thing that is of a poysonous Malignity to them, contrary to, and destructive of their Natures, who hath taught them to run presently to that Herb or Simple, that is the most proper and certain Remedy for them in that case? Who hath taught them in several of the Diseases, which some of them are subject unto, to fly presently to that Remedy which is most suitable to that Distemper, and affords
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the most proper and certain Cure? Who hath taught the Ants that providence, to gather their Meat in the Summer, to carry it with much Labour and Industry, and with all that mutual Help they afford one another, in order to make their Heap, where they treasure it up against the Winter, and must starve for want of it, if they had it not laid up by them? Who hath taught them to Bite off the Ends of every Corn that it may not grow, and so frustrate their end in gathering it? Who hath taught them to fence it about with great Heaps of Dust, that the Rain come not at it, to corrupt and render it unfit for their Nourishment? Do not all these Things discover to us the Finger of Him, who is *Wonderful in Counsel, and Excellent in Working*, as the Prophet speaks? *Isa. 28. 29.* Have they not all learn'd their Arts, and receiv'd their several Instincts from Him, *whose Wisdom is unsearchable, and whose ways, even in the most common and ordinary Courses of his Providence, are past finding out?* Whence hath the Spider learn'd that rare Art of Spinning out of her own Bowels, so fine and curious a Web, and of hanging that her exquisite Network,

work, where 'tis most likely to entangle her Prey? Who hath taught the Silkworm, to furnish those who *are in Kings Houses with soft Raiment* out of her own Bowels, also? Who hath taught her, when she hath left her Eggs behind her, to continue and propagate her Kind, to make her own Grave, and enshrine her dead Body within the Bottom of Silk which she hath spun? Is there not an higher Cause than that which we call Nature, that hath most wisely order'd these Things thus to be, and act? That hath given them their respective Properties and Instincts, according to which, and from which, they have ever acted alike; and like all others of their Kind, without any Error and Deviation from the common Rule; unless in some very few Instances, where they have been hinder'd, and put by That, which, according to the Inclinations of their Nature, they intended and aim'd at? But above all Instances of this Nature, is that of the Bees, which is the last that I shall mention.

Where 1st, How admirable is the Artifice of making their Combs! He that shall take a White empty Comb newly made, and not yet replenish'd
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with Honey, and take a View of the exact Frame and uniform Composure of every little Cell or Receptacle thereof; how curiously Wrought, how exactly Angled, how exquisitely Placed to fall in, and meet, and close with the Angles of those that are next it on every side, and how firmly and closely they are all compacted and joyn'd together, to make up the entire Comb, must acknowledge, that the Eye of Man never saw a more curious Piece of Work, nor more exactly fitted for the Use to which it serves. And yet all this these little Animals do,

1. Without Hands, or any such Instruments, or Tools, as we are forced to make use of.

2. Without Light, they Labour in the Dark, and they have neither Sunbeams nor Candle to help them to see their Work, to manage it aright, and to espy and correct the Errors of it; and yet they never fail to Perfect it with as much Exactness, Beauty and Uniformity, as if they had all those Helps and Advantages that we are furnish'd with.

3. All this they do as artificially, and as perfectly well at first, as if they had by many Years Exercise, in that way
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of Employment, attain'd their Skill. How do we Bungle at Things, when we first set about them! And, notwithstanding all the Advantages which our Reason affords us, how long is it before we attain to do a Thing exactly, and according to the Rules of Art, where any thing of Art and Curiosity is required!

2. Having thus prepar'd their Combs, and made ready the little Cells which are to receive the Honey, in which Work much more of Art and Providence is observable, than I have now been able to take Notice of; with what Skill and Industry do they gather the Honey, traversing all the Country, finding out and fastening on those Flowers where 'tis to be had; and carrying it to their Hives with such Labour and Travel, that they many times sink under their Burthens, and die at their Work. I might be endless almost, if I should enlarge on all Particulars of their Art and Industry, their Order and Discipline, and those lively Resemblances of Polity and Government, that are to be found in this little Common-wealth.

Now once more let me ask the Atheist, what Account he can give of the
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the strange and wonderful Instincts, from which these little Animals are acted in all this, unless he will open his Eyes, and be convinc'd, that the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of some supreme Being, hath instructed them, and set them to work. Could they know how to act in this Manner, and so suitably and agreeably to the Ends and Purposes for which they act, unless they were directed and governed by a superior and most wise Cause, to whom they owe their Being and Skill, their Nature, and all the Properties, Inclinations and Instincts thereof? He that shall seriously ponder these Things, can never satisfy himself concerning the Rise and Original of them, until his Reason leads him to God. O then let us all see, and admire God in all these Effects of his Power, Wisdom and Goodness; let us with the *Psalmist* acknowledge, that the *Works of the Lord are great; that his Work is honourable and glorious*, *Pf. 111. 2, 3.* and let us cry out with him, *Pf. 8. 9.* upon the like Occasion, *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth!* Once more let our highest Admirations burst out into the same Language with his, *Pf. 104. 24. O Lord,*
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how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches.

6. The admirable Frame of Man's Body is another Evidence of the Being of God. There is indeed much of the Power and Wisdom of God, shining forth in the Composure of all other Animals, even of the least Fly, or Insect; all the several Parts of those little Creatures being so exquisitely framed and set together, and so exactly fitted for their respective Uses and Services, that 'tis not possible to correct or mend any thing therein, or to change or alter any thing in the whole Fabrick of such a Creature, but for the worse. You spoil the Work, you deface its Beauty, and impair its Usefulness, if you either take away from it, or add to it any one Part; or if you give any Part another Shape or Proportion, or assign it any other Place or Posture in the Body. Now this Beauty, Order, and Usefulness, is so much the more to be admir'd, if these two Things be consider'd.

1. The Matter whence, and the Manner how, these little Creatures are produc'd. They are mostly bred and generated, out of some corrupt and putrify'd

trify'd Matter, warm'd, cherish'd, and influenc'd by the Heat of the Sun. Out of this noisom and stinking Matter, thus wrought upon, within a few Days comes forth a Creature of an exquisite Frame and Composure, endued with Life, Sense, and Motion, and in that respect more noble than the most excellent of all inanimate Beings, the glorious Body of the Heavens, Sun, Moon, and Stars not excepted.

2. Another Thing that renders these Productions the more admirable, is, the most perfect Uniformity of them all that are of the same Species. They have all the same make, the same Composition, the same Parts, the same Proportion, the same Shape, the same Nature, Properties, and Qualities. Compare a Thousand little Gnats or Flies, or whatever other Insects of the same kind together, you shall not observe the least Difference between them, but an exact Agreement, and perfect Correspondence between them all. You see them all as perfectly like one another, as if one of them had been first made in that Form, and then all the rest had been framed and fashioned after that Pattern. Now what is there either in this corrupt

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and stinking Matter, or in the Heat and Influences of the Sun, or in both together, to give such an excellent, and uniform Frame and Composure, as these little Creatures have; and moreover to animate them, to endue them with Life, and Sense, and bestow upon them an inward noble Principle of Activity and Motion? Is it not most apparent, that it must of Necessity be, by a most wise and powerful Agent, that the Bodies of these little Things are so exquisitely and uniformly fram'd? And that they have all their Parts and Proportions thus assign'd them? Such Legs, such Wings, such Heads, such Mouths, such Eyes, and so for the rest of their Parts; and that the whole Body so fram'd and made up out of these Parts set together, should be endued with an inward Principle of Life, Sense, and Motion, so that it can act it self, move it self, command it self, and dispose of it self as it pleaseth?

But above that of all other Animals, most admirable is the Frame of Man's Body. As this Body was intended to be the Organ and Instrument of a more noble Soul, so it was meet that the Frame of it should be so much the more exquisite.

exquisite. Learned Men of all Ages ever since the Invention of Arts and Sciences, have studied the Body of Man, and made diligent Enquiry into the Structure and Composition of it; and every Age hath added something, this last Age, many considerable Things to what had been before found out and observed. And yet so much Artifice and wise Contrivance is there, in this excellent Piece of Work, that the Wisdom of the Contriver and Framer, is to this Day in great Part undiscover'd. There are many Things still, in which the most Skilful Artists, and Perfect Anatomists, are at a Loss, and in the Dark. Could you suppose a Clock or a Watch, so artificially framed, as that all the most exquisite and compleat Artists in that kind, tho' they studied it all their Days, could never find out all the Art and Skill, that was employed in the making of it, would you not conclude the Framer thereof to have been an excellent Workman? Lo here is in the Body of Man, a Piece of Work, that learned Men have been Anatomizing, taking asunder, looking into, viewing, and considering for many Ages past, and yet still they come far short of ha-

ving attained the perfect Knowledge of it. In many Things they are still to seek; which amuse and puzzle them still, after all their Enquiries. But so far as they understand it, they admire the Wisdom and Art of the Contriver and Framers, whoever he were; and therefore they conclude there must also be the same Wisdom, and excellent Contrivance in all the rest, tho' they can't reach or understand it.

To run over all the several Parts of Man's Body, and to take a View of the exquisite, and never sufficiently admir'd Frame of them, were a Business fitter for another Place, and would take up a great deal of Time. It would be almost an endless Thing to discourse of the Bones, Ligaments, Sinews, Muscles, Membranes, Veins, Arteries; of the several Temperament of all these, and other similiary Parts; of their respective Uses to which they serve, and how exactly they are adapted and fitted for them; of all the Parts and Vessels that serve for Concoction, for turning the Food we receive into Chyle, and then into Blood; and for conveying and distributing it into all the Parts of the Body; and to every Part, that both for
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Quantity and Quality which it requires ; as also for separating and carrying off what is not fit for Nourishment. How wonderful a Thing is it, that these Parts are so contrived, so fitted for their respective Uses, and so placed in the Body, that in Persons well and healthful they constantly do their Office, we know not how. We only take in Food, but how 'tis concocted, what Changes and Alterations it undergoes before it be fitted for Nourishment, and how 'tis distributed, and each Part receives its proportionable Growth from it, we heed not, nor are we for the most Part capable of Understanding.

Then for the outward Parts, how admirable is the Frame and Contexture of them ! Especially some of them. What rare Artifice is there, in the Frame of the Eye ! The Humours, and Tunics, and Muscles and Nerves that belong to it, and its Figure, and Position or Place in the Body, its Motions, and whatever else appertains to it, how accurately are they accommodated, how exactly fitted for the Use that was intended to be made of it ! There is no Man that understands, in any measure, the Anatomy of the Eye, but must be

enforced to acknowledge, unless he be perversly Obstinate, or wilfully Blind, that nothing could be more wisely framed, and more exquisitely suited to the Use for which it serves. The like might be said of the Organs of Hearing and Smelling, and other Senses; and of the Instruments of Speech, that noble and excellent Faculty which Man is furnish'd with, to communicate his Notions and Conceptions to others. All these are so fitted for their respective Uses, that 'tis absolutely impossible there should have been a more accurate Contrivance of them, in order to the Offices and Ends for which they were intended.

And as Man is endued with Reason to understand, to think, to meditate, to design and contrive; so he hath not only a Tongue, with other Instruments of Speech, and the Faculty of Language to declare his Thoughts, but an Hand to act and manage what his Reason shall design, direct, suggest, and put him upon. This noble Instrument of Action, our Hand, the Philosopher deservedly calls ὄργανον ὀργάνων. An Instrument so wisely and admirably compos'd and fram'd, with so many Bones
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and Joints, Junctures and Ligaments, Muscles and Sinews, as that it might open and shut, bow and bend, wind about, and turn it self every Way, and be applied to a Thousand Uses. With the Hand the Artificer not only frames and fashions all his Work, but makes him Tools and Instruments, with which he works. With the Hand the Smith makes use of his Hammer and his File; with this the Carpenter uses his Ax, and his Saw, and the Mason his Trowel. With this the Husbandman holds his Plow, and sows his Seed, and reaps his Corn, and gathers in his Harvest. With this the Soldier brandisheth his Sword, and trailes his Pike: With this the Scribe handles his Pen, and the Painter his Pencil: With this the Limner draws his Lines and Proportions: With this the Engraver exerciseth his Skill, and polishes his Work: With this the Spinster turns about her Wheel, and draws out her Thread: With this the Needlewoman and Embroiderer make all their curious Devises and Embroideries. And so necessary are all the Parts of the Hand, that a Man could not well be without one little Bone or Joint: Take away but his Thumb or Fore-finger,

and the Hand would be upon the Matter almost Useless and Unserviceable, as to all the principal and most considerable Uses thereof.

Now to bring all this yet a little nearer to the Business in Hand; all these Things consider'd,

1. We must needs grant that 'tis impossible that the Body of Man should thus be framed, and all the Parts of it be set together by Chance, or by the casual Meetings, and fortuitous Concourse of Atoms, as some have wildly fancy'd. It must be acknowledg'd, that it was purposely so contriv'd, fram'd, and set together. For else how should it fall out that human Bodies have constantly and exactly the same Compofure, Parts, and Lineaments? And again, if it were by Chance, how should all the Parts be so exactly fitted for their Uses and Offices? These Things are undeniable Demonstrations, that the Body of Man is a Structure design'd, an Edifice so erected and set up, on Purpose.

2. Neither can it be deny'd to have been done by an Agent of admirable Wisdom; by one who most wisely consider'd his Work, and fitted all the
Parts

Parts of it, for the various Ends and Purposes, which he intended they should serve.

3. It must also be acknowledg'd that the Agent, whoever he was, must have been furnish'd with Power, answerable to his Wisdom. None could be the Author of such a Work, the Builder of such a Structure, but one who had an Eminency of both. A wise Man that hath a good Fancy, may contrive many Things in his Mind, which he can never effect. When he comes to put them in Execution, he may find they are impracticable; and so all his Contrivances are no better, than if he should think of Building Castles in the Air. He may find they are impracticable in themselves, and from the Nature of the Things, they being such as carry in them a Repugnancy or Inconsistency; and then there wanted Wisdom in the Contriver, that could not foresee it: or if not so, yet Impracticable as to him, and then there was a Defect of Power to put them in Execution. But this Contrivance of the Body of Man, was never Impracticable in it self, nor in respect of Want of sufficient Power in the Agent. We see the Work is admirably

mirably consistent with it self in all its Parts and particular Members, and suits all the Uses intended ; and that so well and exactly, that like a well framed Clock, it never fails to strike right, and answer all the Ends for which it was made.

What Power this requires we may the better apprehend, if we consider, that the united Strength of all the Men in the World is not able to make any one single Part of the Body, not a Finger, or a Toe, not one Joynt, not one little Bone, not the least and most inconsiderable Part in the whole Body, so as to give it its due natural Temper, Structure, and Usefulness ; what a Transcendency of Power then is required to give Being to the whole, and so exquisitely and firmly to joyn and knit all the Parts of it together ? But this will further appear, to our highest Admiration, if withal we consider how and where this wonderful Fabrick is composed. This curious Work is wrought in the *lowest Parts of the Earth*, as the Psalmist expresseth it, *Psal.* 139. 15. in the Womb of the Mother ; even She in whom 'tis wrought not knowing how, and being as much a Stranger to the manner of the Fashion,

Fashioning and Limbing of the Infant within her, as the Infant it self is. 'Tis true they talk of a plastick Vertue, by which the Infant is framed in the Womb, and which gives it all Parts, due Shape, Lineaments, and Proportions. Be it so; but how strange and wonderful a Thing is it, that there should be such a Vertue! A Vertue that so constantly and unerringly acts and brings its Work to Perfection! So that not one Part is wanting in the whole Fabrick of Man's Body, not one Part superfluous or redundant, not one Part mis-shapen or mis-placed: that among almost three Hundred Bones, and twice as many Muscles, and a very great Number and Variety of other Parts, there should not be one less, or more than there ought to be, or of any other Temperament, Figure, or Situation than what, according to the Design and Platform of him who drew the Scheme, and contriv'd the Frame of the Body, is due to it. He that seriously ponders these Things, must wilfully shut his Eyes, and offer Violence to his own Reason, if he doth not in this great Work, discern the Footsteps of that unspeakable Wisdom and Power which is no where
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else to be found, but in that excellent Being, in whom all imaginable Perfections meet: How can we recount these Things, and not cry out with the Psalmist, every one for himself, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well.* Ps. 139. 14. Galen, tho' an Heathen, and one who elsewhere sometimes speaks doubtfully enough concerning these Things, yet in his Books, *De Formatione Fætus*, and *De Usu Partium*, having consider'd the Body of Man, and discours'd of the Use of the Parts thereof, is enforc'd to acknowledge *τι Θεῖον*, something Divine, and above the Sphere of Nature, in the Framing thereof: 'Tis just Matter of Shame, that there should be any found amongst us, so blind and atheistical, as not to see and acknowledge what that Heathen did: 'Tis moreover most odious and horrid Ingratitude, that they who have received from God, a Body of such an excellent Frame, should deny him the Honour of having made it, and bestowed it upon them, and ascribe it to Chance or Fate, or any Thing else rather than to Him, to whose Wisdom, Power, and Goodness alone, they are indebted for it.

Neither

Neither is their Sin less, who abuse this their Body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, to the Dishonour of the Maker, and the Wronging of their more excellent and immortal Souls; a Body framed for better and more noble Ends and Purposes, than to be made an Instrument of Sin, and a Weapon of Unrighteousness, to bid Defiance against Heaven, and Fight against God: You who addict and give up your selves to Intemperance and Excess, to Gluttony and Drunkenness, to all Manner of abominable Uncleaness and Filthiness; who abuse your Tongues by Lying, Backbiting, and Slandering, by Scoffing at Religion, and corrupt Communication, by horrid Oaths, Perjuries, and Blasphemies; You whose Eyes are full of Adultery, and whose Ears are open to listen to filthy Talking, evil Speaking, and all Manner of lewd Discourse; You who abuse your Hands by receiving Bribes, by Stealing and Purloining, by Rapine, Violence and Oppression; think, O think how much you debase and dishonour your Bodies: and how you will answer to God this horrible abuse of them. Hath God accommodated your Soul with an Instrument of so
excellent

excellent a Contexture, to be made Use of and employ'd in the Service, and to the Honour of the Maker? And can you be so Base, as to serve the Devil with it? Consider with your selves how highly you Provoke the God of Heaven. Ah! far be it from you still to go on thus, to sully and deform this curious Workman-ship, this Master-piece of the whole visible Creation. Let the Time past suffice you to have done the Will of the Flesh, and to have addicted your selves to the Service of Sin and Satan. Henceforth *yield your Members Servants unto Righteousness*, consecrate and devote the whole Man to the Service of God; *glorify him in your Bodies, and Spirits, which are his*, that so he may be pleased to glorify both, when the Lord Jesus shall come from Heaven to *change these our vile Bodies, and fashion them like unto his own glorious Body*; and shall cause the *righteous to shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*.

7. The Soul of Man, and the excellent Faculties thereof, may afford another Argument, from whence the Being of God may be concluded: these Things might be largely discours'd of, but they being of that Nature, that 'tis not easy

to make them so plain and easy to be understood, but that many Hearers would be incapable of apprehending them, I shall therefore speak the less of them. There is nothing almost in the Soul but is wonderful, and necessarily leads us to an higher Cause, a supreme Being, without Recourse whereunto, and Acknowledgment whereof, we can never satisfy our selves.

1. The Production of the Soul cannot be ascribed to any natural Cause. 'Tis not possible that such an immaterial and excellent Being as the Soul is, should come out of gross, dull and earthy Matter, however wrought upon, prepared and disposed. Neither can it be conceived or apprehended, how the Soul, being immaterial and indivisible, should be imparted and transmitted from one Man to another, from the Parent to the Child. For the Soul being a spiritual Substance, and so incapable of being divided, must either be wholly and entirely transmitted, and then there would be no Soul left to the Parent, or not be transmitted at all, because, as hath been said, it doth not admit of Partition or Division. Besides, if you should Peremptorily affirm, that the
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Soul passeth from the Parent to the Child, tho' you know not how, yet you must at last be oblig'd to ascend higher, and find out another Cause. For else, what Account can you give concerning the Original of the Soul of the first Man. Some first Man there must needs have been, because you cannot still go further back, and further and further, and never come to any first Man, from whom all other Men had their Beginning. To go still backward and backward, and never be able to come to any Beginning, would make Mankind, and consequently the World to have been eternal, the Impossibility whereof hath formerly been demonstrated. Now this being supposed that there must be some first Man, from whom all other Men spring, if it should be granted, that all Persons descending from him, had their Souls from another, the Child still from the immediate Parent, tho' you know not how, yet whence should that first Man have received his Soul! The Soul of that first Man could not arise out of the Body, or out of the Matter of the Body, however tempered, qualified and prepared. Tho' it might be so alter'd, dispos'd, organiz'd and prepar'd, as
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that it might be fit to receive the Soul, yet it could never produce it, and give Being to it: and therefore we must of Necessity be enforced at last to look out after an higher Cause, that might give a Being to this noble Part of the Soul; and what can that Cause be but God?

Some have endeavour'd to illustrate the Original of Souls, taking their Beginning successively from one another, by the Comparison of lighting one Candle at another. Which is but a dark Similitude, tho' taken from the Light, and is far short of representing in any Measure, the Manner how one Soul can receive its Beginning and Being from another. For if the Soul neither imparts or transmits it self, nor any Part of it self, as hath been said, how doth it give and convey a Soul to another. Doth it make or produce an entire new Soul out of nothing? I suppose no Man can understand how that can be, nor will hastily affirm it. But however let that Comparison pass for good, one Soul proceeds from another, as one Candle is lighted at another. But then there must have been some first Candle, which did not receive its Light from another Candle, but from somewhat
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else. So likewise there must have been some first Soul, from whence the rest are supposed to have issued; and for the Original of that first Soul, you must have Recourse to God, or else you will never find out a Cause thereof, in which you may acquiesce and rest satisfy'd.

2. The Union of the Soul to the Body is another Thing, which necessarily sends us to an higher Cause than any in Nature. The Union of Bodies to Bodies we easily understand, but the Union of Soul and Body, of a Body and a Spirit, and especially so close and strict an Union, as that both make up one Person, and an Union so firm and lasting, that nothing but Death can untie the Knot, and rend Body and Soul asunder; this is a Thing so strange, that a good Account thereof can never be given, but by owning a Cause Superior to Nature, by whom this Marriage of Soul and Body is made, and this strict and curious Knot is tied.

3. The immediate Products and Effects of the Union of Soul and Body, are no less strange. Such as are Life, natural Heat, and the Preservation of the Body from Corruption. Dissolve the Union of Body and Soul, and Life is gone,

gone, the Body becomes a liveless Lump of Earth, a dead Carcase; the natural Heat is extinguish'd, and immediately Corruption and Rottenness succeeds, and a mouldring of that Body into Dust, which it may be for the Space of an Hundred Years, had been preserv'd, so long as the Soul was in it, which was as it were the Salt thereof, to preserve and keep it from Putrefaction.

4. The sensitive Powers and Faculties of the Soul, the Powers of Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Feeling, and Tasting, how wonderful are they if well consider'd, tho' the commonness of these Things, makes us the more Regardless of them. By these sensitive Faculties of the Soul, all manner of sensible Objects are perceiv'd. We have the Perception of Light and Colours by the Eye, of Sounds by the Ear, of Odours by the Nose, of all Varieties of Tasts by the Palate, of Heat and Cold, Dryness and Moisture, Softness and Hardness, and all other Objects of the like Nature, by the Sense of Feeling; and so there is nothing almost belonging to Bodies, but may be perceived by one Sense or other. Now tho' all these sensitive Faculties, and their respective

Operations, are strange and admirable, yet among all the Senses, that of Seeing is most wonderful. That the Species or Images of all Manner of visible Objects should be received into the Eye ; that the Images and Representations, not only of smaller Things, but of Houses and Castles, and Towers, of Plains and Valleys, of Hills and Mountains, and all that marvellous Variety of Things contained in them, (to say nothing of the Heavens, and the Celestial Bodies, the Sun, Moon and Stars) should with their Colours, Figures, and Proportions, be received into, and comprehended within so small a Thing, as that which we call the Sight of the Eye ; how wonderful, and how astonishing a Thing is it ! And then as for the Act of Seeing or Perceiving these Things by the Eye, how strange and admirable is that also ! A Man that hath a good Eye, sees all Manner of Objects that are presented to his View ; he clearly discerns the different Colours, and Figures, and Proportions, and Distances of them ; and all this without any Pain or Trouble to him ; yea with Pleasure and Delight ; and yet he knows not how he sees them, nor can he give any good
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Account thereof. He is therein, when he considers it, a Wonder to himself; he admires how he sees and perceives the Things that are before him, and is almost as little acquainted with the Manner how he sees, as a blind Man is with the Differences and Variety of Colours. Then how the Images of the Objects of the external Senses are carried into the Brain, and there perceived by the common Sense, as they call it, how the Fancy takes them thence, and what strange Work it makes of them, are Things, which tho' a Man's Soul be exercised in continually, yet he knows not what to make of them, nor can he give any Account to himself of those Actions of his own Soul, which he is conversant in, and taken up with every Hour, every Quarter of an Hour, and every Minute almost while he is awake. Then for the Faculty of Memory, the third internal Sense, as they commonly reckon it, that is more wonderful, if any Thing can be, than any of those Things that have been hitherto mentioned. How the Images of Ten Thousand Things, even of those Things which a Man hath seen, or heard, or learn'd when he was a Child, should be preserv'd in the Memory,

mory, and called to mind as there is occasion, is that which we may admire and stand amaz'd at, but can never understand.

5. If we ascend yet higher, and take into our Consideration the more noble Faculties of the rational Soul, the Understanding and the Will, but especially the Understanding, we shall yet see more Cause of being filled with the greatest Astonishment. By this rare Faculty of the Soul, a Man is enabled to discourse of those Things that are most sublime and excellent ; and to look into those that are most deep and profound. By this he is here at present considering the Things that are before him, the Objects of his Senses which he sees, which he handles, which he tastes ; and in a Moment he flies to the farthest Ends of the Earth, he converseth in his Thoughts with the *East-Indians*, with the *Antipodes*, and with the *Americans*. By this noble Faculty, while he is confined, it may be to a Prison or Dungeon, to his Chamber, his Closet, his Bed, he traverseth the World, and passeth from the North Pole, to the South. By this he represents to himself, the Transactions and Affairs of former Ages and Generations,

tions, as if they had been but Yesterday done. By this he consults and adviseth, holds correspondence and converse with all those wise and learned Men of former Times, who were in their Graves many Hundreds, yea some Thousands of Years before he was born. By this Faculty of the Soul he takes wing, and in the Twinkling of an Eye mounts up to Heaven, and there contemplates those glorious Bodies in their Magnitudes, their Distances, their Motions, and their Influences. And after all this, he returns home again, and by a reflexive Act, proper only to the Soul of Man, he takes an Account of himself, and brings his own Actions to the Bar of Reason, either acquitting or condemning himself, according to the Quality of them.

Now tell me, Can you think it possible that this noble and excellent Soul, that is endued and dignified with such rare Faculties, and the Exercise and Operations of whose Faculties are so strange and wonderful, should derive its Being, and receive its Endowments and Perfections from any other, than such a supreme and transcendently excellent, most wise and powerful Being, as that

which we call God. Tell me whether you can find any Thing else in all the World, unto which the Birth and Original of this divine Soul can be rationally ascribed. Say if it doth not necessarily carry you up to God, and compel you to acknowledge that such a one there must be, because you find nothing else to rest in, from which this Soul should take its Beginning. I am sensible that I have dwelt too long upon these Things: but I was not willing to wave them, in regard they are such Demonstrations of the Existence of a God, as cannot be gainsaid, but by one who offers Violence to his Reason! and yet they could not be handled with that Plainness and Perspicuity as I could have wished: But I have now done with Them, and come to Things of a more obvious, and easily intelligible Nature.

8. The great Works done in the World, that exceed the Power of Nature, and the Sphere and Activity of all natural Agents, are another Demonstration of the Existence of God. Such are those Works which we call Miracles; as the giving Sight to the Blind, even to such as were born Blind, and that without the Application of any external
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nal Means, that could be of any Efficacy for the producing of such an Effect; the curing of Diseases instantly, and only by speaking a Word, and the raising of the Dead. That such great Works as these, exceeding the Power of Nature, and necessarily carrying us up to a Cause above Nature, were truly and really wrought by Christ and his Apostles, I shall not now go about to prove by Scripture; the Truth whereof the Atheist denies, and can do no otherwise as long as he denies the Being of God; on whose Veracity and infallible Testimony, the Truth of the Scriptures wholly depends. I say I shall not go about to prove by Scripture, that such miraculous Works were wrought, but by other Testimonies: and yet those however such as cannot be denied, or questioned, unless by one that will deny any Thing. That such Works were true and really wrought, appears

I. Because the Christians did ordinarily and constantly appeal to them, and make use of them against the Gentiles, to evidence the Truth of the Christian Religion. Thus we find that *Tertullian* and *Justin Martyr* in their Apologies for the Christians, still prove the Truth of the

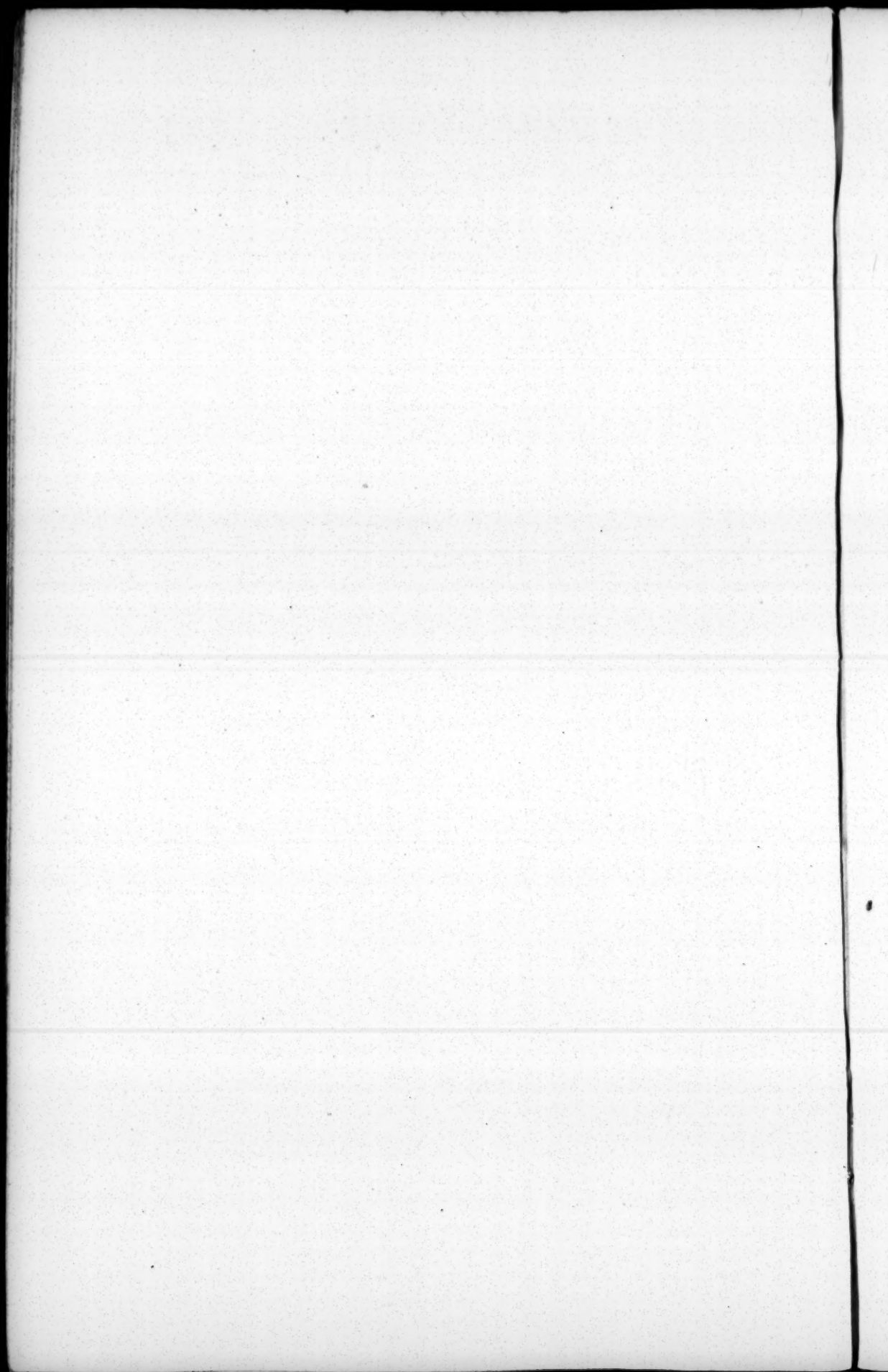
the Christian Religion, by the Miracles which confirmed it; and that not only by the Miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, but by many others also, the Gift of Miracles continuing in the Church, even till *Irenaus's* Time, who liv'd about the middle of the third Century, or somewhat after. Yea, they do not only alledge the Miracles to prove the Truth of the Religion they professed, but challenge the Gentiles to come and see them wrought before their Eyes. Now what Madness as well as Impudence had this been in them, if no such Miracles had been wrought?

2. As for the Miracles wrought by Christ, the publick Registers and Annals of the *Romans* Recorded them, as they did all memorable Things that were done every Year. And that these great Works were Register'd by them, and found upon Record in their Annals, as memorable Things, appears, in regard the fore-mentioned Writers, *Tertullian* and *Justin Martyr* appeal to them, as Things that were in their Enemies own Custody, and could not be deny'd by them. Now is it imaginable, that they could have had the Face to send them to their own Registers for the Truth

Truth of such Miracles, as to matters of Fact, if no such Thing had been there recorded? How easy had it been for every one that would consult those Registers, to prove to their Faces, the notorious Falshood of their Allegations, if no such Matters had been to be found there?

3. The most bitter Enemies of the Christian Religion, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, never denied the Truth of those great Works, as to the matter of Fact, but acknowledging them to have been really done, ascribed them to the Devil; which they need not to have done, nor would they have done, if the Facts of them could have been denied. So then it being clear and manifest beyond a Possibility of being contradicted or gain-said, that such Miracles were wrought, that great Things exceeding the Power or Efficacy of any natural Causes were done, we must thence conclude, that they must have been effected by one who hath a transcendent Power above that of any natural Cause, and that must be God, and none else. Deny the Being of God, and you can never give a satisfactory Account of those miraculous Works.

SERMON



SERMON VI.

John xvii. Ver. 3.

This is Life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

IX. **T**HE remarkable and undeniable Effects of a most wise, just, and powerful Providence in the Government of the World, and particularly in the dispensing of Rewards and Punishments, are another Argument to prove the Existence of God. 'Tis true, that neither Vertue is always so visibly rewarded, nor Vice so punished in this World, but that many Instances still there are of Vertue oppress'd and borne down, and of Vice flourishing and prospering; from which Dispensations of Providence here we may conclude a
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Judgment to come, which shall set all Things right, and give to every Man according to his Works. But yet however this World is full of many such remarkable Instances, also of Vertue eminently rewarded, and Vice signally punished, as may abundantly evidence to us, that the Affairs of this World, and the Matters relating to the Government thereof, are not manag'd by blind Chance or Fate, but by a supreme Being of infinite Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, sitting at the Helm. As for virtuous Actions, besides that inward Quiet, and Serenity of Mind attending them, which even Heathens have had experience of, how often is oppressed Innocency strangely vindicated and rescued, even by Methods of an extraordinary Nature, and beyond all Expectation! And what strange and unexpected Deliverances, have Persons of eminent Vertue been surpriz'd with in their most extream Dangers, and desperate Exigencies, when looking round about them they could espy nothing whence they might rationally expect or hope any Relief might come! When in their own Sense, and in the Sense and Judgment of all other Men, they have been
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just sinking irrecoverably, how wonderfully, powerfully, and seasonably have their Succours come in, even in that very Moment, when unless they had come they must have been undone, and from that Quarter also it may be, from whence no Man could have imagined they would, or could have come! And then for Rewards, who is either so blind, or so unconcern'd and careless an Observer of what comes to pass in the World, that hath not often taken Notice of such an exact Correspondence between Men's good Actions, and the Rewards apportioned to them, as could never have fallen out but by the wise, just, and over-ruling Providence of such a righteous Governour of the World, as we believe God to be. Neither on the other Side are the Instances of vindictive Justice, punishing notorious Offenders, less remarkable, or less pregnant Demonstrations of the Being of God; who thus proportions and weighs out Punishments according to the Nature and Quality of the Crimes which Men have committed, and the Guilt they have contracted: And this Argument for proving the Existence of God will appear to be the stronger, and the more

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concluding, if we shall a little look into and consider the Circumstances of that Severity of Punishment, that overtakes and lights upon some flagitious and profligate Persons.

1. The strange and wonderful Discovery of some Crimes, that the Offenders may be brought to condign Punishment: When Wickedness hath been so warily contrived, and so closely and cunningly carried on and acted, as that all the Wit of Man, could never have found a way to trace it out, yet it hath however come to light, and been discover'd, and the Discovery hath been made by such Means, as that all Beholders might observe the Footsteps of a most wise and righteous Providence therein. Secret Things that have lain hid, and buried in Darkness many Years, how strangely have they been raked out of the Dust, and exposed to the View of the Sun! and that by some small and inconsiderable Thing, to make the Discovery of them so much the more wonderful, and the revenging Hand of the supreme Judge of the World, the more visible and conspicuous.

2. The Agreeableness of the Punishment to the Sin, the Circumstances of
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the one being so suited to those of the other, as clearly discovers the Finger of some most wise, righteous, and powerful Revenger of Sin, who so contriv'd and order'd Things, as that the Sinner should suffer in the same kind in which he had offended; in the same place, in the same manner, by the same means which were the Matter and Instruments of his Sin. When *Adonibezek*, whose Cruelty had cut off the Thumbs and great Toes of so many Kings, shall at length receive the same measure himself; when *Abimelech* shall be destroy'd by means of those *Sichemites*, who had been Assistants to him in destroying his own Brethren; when Dogs shall lick *Ahab's* Blood, and eat *Jezebel's* Flesh, in that very Plat of Ground where, through their Oppression and Cruelty, Dogs had licked the Blood of innocent *Naboth*; when the World is full of such Examples of notorious Sinners, who have been thus signally Punish'd, and whose Sufferings have been so perfectly answerable to their Sins, who can chuse but acknowledge a supreme Being, thus disposing of these Things, weighing Men's Sins and Punishments in the same Balance, and giving them the same

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Measure which they have measured to others? Who, that will observe and ponder these Things, must not be forc'd to acknowledge, that there is a most just, and wise, and powerful Governour of the World, and conclude, *That verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

10. The Prediction or Foretelling of future Things of a casual and contingent Nature, which no Reason of Men or Angels could foresee in their Causes, is another Argument to prove the Existence of God: We have many Instances of such Predictions in Scripture, where also we have an Account of the Events exactly corresponding with the Predictions. That the Walls of *Jericho* should fall, when on the seventh Day the *Israelites* should compass it seven Times, and seven Priests should blow with seven Trumpets of Rams Horns, *Josh. 6. 5.* which was accordingly fulfilled, v. 20. Tho' no Assault was made, no Violence was offer'd, yet the Walls, at the Sounding of the Trumpets, fell flat upon the Ground. That whosoever should attempt the Rebuilding of *Jericho*, should lay the Foundation thereof in his first-born, and set up the Gates of it in his youngest Son;

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Son; that is, that he should lose his eldest Son when he should begin to build it, and his youngest Son when he should be about to finish it; *Josh. 6. 26.* which propheticall Curse, pronounc'd by the Mouth of *Joshuah*, was many Hundreds of Years after punctually fulfill'd, when in the Reign of *Ahab*, *Hiel the Bethelite* boldly adventur'd to rebuild that cursed Place, *1 Kings 16. 34.* That Dogs should lick the Blood of *Ahab*, where through his and *Jezebel's* Oppression and Cruelties, Dogs had licked the Blood of Innocent *Naboth*, *1 Kings 21. 19.* And that Dogs should eat *Jezebel* by the Wall of *Jezreel*, *1 Kings 21. 23.* both which Predictions were in all their Circumstances fulfill'd, *1 Kings 22. 38.* as to *Ahab*; and *2 Kings 9. 36.* as to *Jezebel*. That a Child should be born, *Josiah* by Name, that should offer the Priests of the high Places upon *Jeroboam's* Altar at *Bethel*, and should burn Men's Bones thereon, *1 Kings 13. 2.* which Prophecy was fulfilled by *Josiah* about three hundred Years after, as we read, *2 Kings 23. 15, 16.* That the Prophet, which foretold these Things, should for his Disobedience to the Word of the Lord, whereby he had been forbidden to eat
O 2 Bread,

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Bread, or drink Water in *Bethel*, be slain by a Lion, and not come to the Sepulchre of his Fathers, *1 Kings* 13. 21, 22. which was accordingly fulfilled, v. 24. That the Noble-man that could not believe the great Plenty foretold by the Prophet *Elisba*, should see it with his Eyes, but not eat thereof, *2 Kings* 7. 2. which was remarkably fulfill'd ; for being trode upon by the People in the Gate, he Died. v. 17. That *Cyrus* should conquer the *Babylonian* Empire, take *Babylon*, and proclaim Liberty to the *Jews*, to return to their own Land, and rebuild the Temple, *Is.* 44. 38. which was exactly fulfilled, *2 Chron.* 36. 22, 23. and *Ezra* 1. 1, 2, 3. tho' foretold a hundred Years before *Cyrus* was born. That *Zedechiah* should be taken by the *Chaldean* Army, and carried Captive to *Babylon*, and yet not see it with his Eyes. *Ezek.* 12. 13. Which was most signally fulfill'd, when being taken Captive, he was carried to *Riblah*, and his Eyes being there put out, he was afterwards carried to *Babylon*, as is recorded, *Jer.* 39. 6, 7. and again *Jer.* 52. 10, 11.

Now tho' I do not urge the divine Authority of these Scriptures, because the Atheist denying the Being of God,
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consequently denies also the divine Authority of the Scriptures, yet allowing but the same Credit to the Scriptures that is given to other historical Writings, and taking it for Granted, that the Things now instanced in are truly reported; namely, that they were indeed so foretold, as hath been said, and that the Things foretold were so fulfill'd and accomplish'd, as the Scriptures report them to have been: I say, this being supposed and granted, which is no more than we allow and ascribe to many human Writings, which we reject not as Falshoods and Fictions, but give the Authors of them the Honour of being accounted true and credible Historians; we may hence infer strongly and undeniably the Existence of God. For how could any Man or Angel foretel these contingent Events so particularly and exactly, together with the Circumstances of them, unless inspired by one who certainly foreknew them, because he had determined to produce and effect them, and because he knew he was able to do it, as having an omnipotent and irresistible Power to give Being to whatsoever he had determined should come to pass? And what other Cause

can this be, but that supreme and most wise and powerful Being which we call God?

11. Another Argument to evince and prove the Existence of God, may be the many signal Answers to Prayer, that Men, addicting themselves to Devotion, have receiv'd: The Histories of the Church in all Ages are full of Instances of this nature; and the Experience of every good Christian bears witness, that fervent and devout Prayers are remarkably, and many times strangely and wonderfully answer'd. What inward Comfort, Support and Strength have Men in their sore Afflictions, and under their heavy Pressures, obtain'd by Prayers! When they have been even sinking under their Burdens, how have they upon fervent Prayer been reliev'd and upheld! When they have been languishing, and even fainting away, how hath Prayer revived and recovered them again! When they have been under terrible Apprehensions of the Wrath of God, when their Souls have been full of Anguish and Horror, when they have said within themselves, in the Amazement and Consternation of their Spirits, *Who shall dwell with the de-*
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vouring Fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting Burnings, as they cry'd out Is. 33.

14. How have they upon Prayer found the Anguish of their Spirits allayed and asswaged, their Consciences quieted and pacify'd; yea, sometimes, how have their Souls been fill'd with Comfort, and even ravished and transported with Joy unspeakable! And so likewise, what Reliefs have they found by Prayer in their outward Troubles! What seasonable and remarkable Supplies in their Wants! What signal Deliverances in their greatest Straits and Dangers! And how often have their Prayers been answer'd in Kind, and according to the very Letter of them! How often have the very Circumstances of the Answers they have receiv'd, exactly accorded with their Petitions! Now if there were no God to take notice of, and heed their Prayers; if that glorious, omniscient, omnipresent, and powerful Majesty, as they apprehend him, to whom their Prayers are directed, were but an Idol, a Figment of their own Brain, an Image framed and set up by their deluded Fancy, what would all their Prayers signify? What would their most fervent Devotions avail them?

How could it be that their Prayers should be so remarkably answer'd, and that they should obtain such Reliefs and Supports, such inward Comforts and Revivings, such outward Mercies and Deliverances, as from their constant Experience they are assured they do? Do not all those Answers to Prayer proclaim aloud, that there is a most wise, all-knowing, and all-mighty God, that hears all Prayers that are made to him, and is most ready and willing to relieve all such in all their Troubles and Distresses, who betake themselves to him for Succour and Relief?

12. The manifest and palpable Absurdities, the dismal Confusions, and the horrid, black and woful Consequences, which necessarily and inseparably attend the Denial of a God, are strong and unanswerable Demonstrations of the Existence of God: I shall Instance in a few of them.

1. If there were no God, it were impossible there should be any. For Eternity is essential to God: Take away Eternity, and you make that Being from which you take it, to have had its Beginning in Time, and consequently you divest it of the true Notion of God,
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who is supposed to be of that most perfect and independent Nature, that he never had a Beginning, but was from Eternity of and from himself. So then while the Atheist affirms there is no God, he doth and must also of Necessity affirm there can be none, 'tis impossible there should be any. For that which now is not, if it shall at any Time hereafter begin to be, must of Necessity be a temporal Thing, and want that Eternity, without which the Nature of God cannot be. O most horrible, and infinitely more than blasphemous Consequence! what shall I call it? I want Words to express the Horror which the very mention of it, should affect us with.

2. If there were no God, then all the Notions of moral Good and Evil, of Vertue and Vice, would be utterly extinguish'd; then there would be no Distinction between Good and Evil, Vertue and Vice, but only be in reference to human Laws, because the Existence of God being denied, there could be no higher Law from whence the Differences of Good and Evil should be derived. So then to disobey Superiors, to commit Uncleaness, to kill and steal, would

would be Evil only because they are forbidden by Man's Laws ; and again, to be dutiful to our Parents and Benefactors, to be obedient to our Superiors, to live peaceably, to be chaste and pure, to be just and true in all our Dealings and Transactions with Men, to keep our Oaths and Promises, to do to others as we desire they should do to us, and the like, would be good and commendable only in reference to human Laws ; for, as hath been said, if there were no God, there could be no higher Law to make them so. Now what would hence follow, but that all intrinsecal Difference between Good and Evil, between Vertue and Vice, would be hereby abolished and taken away ? For if Things be morally Good or Evil, only as commanded or forbidden by human Laws, as Atheists, who deny the Existence of God, and all divine Laws, must needs maintain ; then take away those human Laws which forbid Lying, Perjury, Disobedience to Superiors, Uncleanneſs, Theft, Robbery, Slander, Defamation, and these Things would have no Evil in them ; yea, upon this Ground, if human Laws should command these Things to be done, the
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moral Nature of them would be quite alter'd, and of Vices they would become Vertues. And so likewise on the other Side, if the Goodness of those good Things before mentioned, depended only upon human Laws enjoining them, as it must if there were no God, no superior Lawgiver, then if those Laws commanding Gratitude to Benefactors, Obedience to Superiours, Chastity, Justice, Truth and Faithfulness in performing Oaths and Promises, were abrogated, those Things would no longer have any moral Goodness in them; and if human Laws enjoin'd the contrary, and Men were commanded to be ungrateful to their Benefactors, disobedient to Parents and other Superiours, to commit Uncleannefs, to Steal and commit Robbery, to Lie and Perjure themselves, to Calumniate, Defame, and Slander their Neighbours, then all these Things, which were foul and abominable Vices before, should become Vertues, and Things would be still transform'd and alter'd as to their moral Nature, as human Laws commanding or forbidding them were changed. But now this is against the Reason of all Mankind, and against the com-

common Notions of Good and Evil that are implanted in all Men's Natures, and engraven upon their Hearts. Should all the Governours and Lawgivers in the World conspire to forbid Men to love and honour their Parents, to be grateful to Benefactors, to be obedient to Superiors, to do to others as they would be done to themselves, yet they would never be able to alter Men's Judgments and Sentiments concerning these Things; they would still approve these Things as good, and entirely close with them. And so if all human Laws in the World, should concur to enjoin and command Unthankfulness to Parents and Benefactors, Disobedience to Superiors, Uncleaness, Theft, Robbery, Lying, Slander, Perjury, and the like, yet would Men never be able to approve of those Things as good, but their Hearts would rise against them from the Force of those inbred Notions of Good and Evil, which are so deeply riveted into their Nature, and imprinted upon their Hearts, that nothing can eradicate or raze them out. But now whence is it that there are such moral Principles, such Notions of Good and Evil upon the Hearts of Men? Undoubtedly there
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must be some supreme Lawgiver, who hath imprinted these Notions upon the Hearts of Men, in reference to an higher Law, unto which they are oblig'd to conform themselves, and of which Law, these Notions and moral Impressions upon the Hearts of Men, are but the Copy and Transcript. If there were no God, there could be no such Law; and if there were no such Law, there would be no such Impressions upon the Heart of Man; for those Notions and Impressions must needs refer to some steady, unvariable, and unchangeable Law; and that Law leads us up to a most wise, just and righteous Lawgiver, which is God.

3. If there were no God, and this Principle were rooted in the Minds of Men, that they had none above them to be accountable to for their Actions, there would be nothing else but Confusion, Injustice, Rapine, Violence, Falshood, Treachery in this World, and whatsoever else can be nam'd, to make the whole Mass of Mankind an Heap of Wickedness, Mischief, and Misery. For what would there be to keep Men in Awe, and to set Bounds to Man's Corruption; what would there be to
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restrain Men from those Excesses and Exorbitances, which their depraved Nature hurries them into, if the Notions of God were extinguish'd, and the Acknowledgment of an higher than the Highest, to call them to an Account of their Actions. Then every Man would give Law to himself, and make his own Will the Measure and Rule of his Actions; then every Man would be for himself alone, consulting his own Interest, minding and pursuing his own private and personal Advantages, without Regard to the Welfare of any beside himself; then neither Bargains and Contracts among Men, nor Covenants, nor Promises, nor Oaths, would signify any Thing, or lay any Tie or Obligation upon Men longer than themselves pleased, and further than the Performance of their Engagements would be for their own Advantages.

And whereas it may be here objected, that tho' the Sense of a God, and of a supreme Lawgiver and Governour of the World, were utterly remov'd out of Men's Minds, and taken away, yet human Laws, made by Agreement among themselves, would keep Men in Awe, and prevent those Excesses and Dis-

Disorders, which else they might run into.

I answer, take away the Sense of a Deity, and the Fear of God, of a supreme Judge of the World, a merciful Rewarder of Vertue, and a just and severe Punisher and Avenger of Vice and Wickedness, and human Laws would little avail for the restraining the impetuous and headstrong Corruption of Man's Nature. For

1. There are many foul and enormous Evils, that human Laws take no Cognizance of; and as to all those Things, Men would be perfectly at Liberty, if the Awe of a God, and the Reverence they have for his Law, did not curb and hold them in.

2. As for those Things which human Laws take notice of, the Force of Men's Laws, even in reference to those very Things, would be much weaken'd and abated, if there were no God, and no higher Law requiring their Compliance with, and their Obedience to all the just and wholsom Laws and Constitutions of those, under whose Government they live. 'Tis the Fear of God, that makes Men yield universal, sincere, and chearful Obedience to their Superi-
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ors in all lawful Things ; when Men are *subject not only for Fear, but for Conscience sake*, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom.*

13. 5.

If there were no God to restrain Men, and keep them in Awe by his Authority, they would obey human Laws no farther than needs they must.

1. Where they had any Hope of concealing their Misdemeanors, and of escaping the Eye of those who had Power to punish them, they would not stick to do any Thing, how contrary to human Laws soever.

2. Neither would they any longer submit themselves in any Thing, to be order'd and govern'd by human Laws, than they had a Mind to be subject, or than they wanted Power to cast off the Yoke. Thus we see how invalid and weak the Laws of Men would be, and how Insignificant for the Keeping of the World in any tolerable good Order, if there were no God to restrain their unruly Corruptions, and to awe them into Obedience to their Governors. We see how much Disorder there is, and how much Lewdness and Debauchery, Disobedience and Refractoriness, Fraud and Injustice, Force and Violence, Treachery

spair, and sink under his Burthen, and perish. And this Condition would not be rare, or that which seldom happens, it would be every Man's Case some time or other, yea often in the Course of his Life, to be in those woful and inextricable Calamities, as would certainly and inevitably ruin him, if there were not a wise, just, powerful, kind, and merciful Governour of the World to take care of him, to be near at hand in all his Distresses; if there were not a supreme Being, most Able and Willing, if duly sought unto, and relied on, to supply all his Wants, succour and uphold him under all his Pressures, to comfort him amidst all his Sorrows, to rescue and deliver him out of all his Dangers and Perplexities. Undoubtedly to deny the Existence of God, is to deprive Men of their greatest, or rather of their only Refuge, Support, and Comfort, both in Life and Death. O that any Man living should be so forsaken of his Reason, so utterly void of all right Understanding, as to think it the Interest of Mankind, that there should be no God, and to believe there is none! What could any Man, that is in his right Wits, more wish or desire
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in reference to his own Good, and the Good of all Mankind, than to be under the Government, and at the Disposal of such a most wise, just, powerful, good, and gracious Governour, as all Men that have right Notions of God, understand him to be? Could a wise Man devise or fancy any Thing more desirable, and more universally Beneficial to human Nature, and to the whole World, than that there should be such a God to sit at the Helm, as supreme Moderator, and manage the Affairs of the Universe. Surely Mankind is little beholding to them, who would make Men believe there is no God, and consequently lay a Foundation of the most black, dismal, and killing Despair of any Relief or Comfort, in any of our most extreme Necessities, and highest Exigencies. O miserable, thrice miserable World, if it were with it as the Atheist professeth to believe, and desires it should be.

So having done with those Arguments, by which the Existence of God is proved, I shall now proceed to make some Application, when I shall have added something by Way of Answer to some Objections, which Men of

atheistical Principles are apt to make against what hath been deliver'd.

Obj. 1. If there be a God which never had any Beginning, but had his Being from Eternity, how is it that he conceal'd himself, and made no Discovery of his Being 'till a few Thousand Years since. 'Tis not yet Six Thousand Years since the World is said to have been created: and what are five or six Thousand Years to the vast and immense Tract of Eternity, during which, God did not make known himself to Be, there being no Creature by, or of which he might be known.

A. 1. This is a bold and presumptuous Part, for Man to demand a Reason why God did not reveal himself sooner. He is perfectly at Liberty to do what pleaseth him, and when he pleaseth; neither is he to give an Account of his Actions.

2. If God had created the World, and thereby made known himself ten Thousand Millions of Years sooner, or as many Millions of Years sooner as you can imagine, the same bold question might as well have been made; for what are all the Millions of Years you can conceive, or imagine, if compar'd with Eternity?

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3. It might as well have been demanded, why he created the World so soon, and thereby discover'd himself, and his Existence, as why he had not done it sooner. A bold impudent Atheist might as well have said, why had he not stay'd some Millions of Years longer before he had discover'd himself, and reveal'd his Existence by the Creation of the World. If the presumptuous Creature will take upon him to require an Account of God's Actions, and of the Seasons and Circumstances of them, he may multiply curious and bold Questions endlessly. If a Man of a profane and atheistical Spirit will abuse his Reason, and malapertly intrude into the Things which God hath thought fit to conceal, he may presume to demand an Account of every Thing that God doth.

4. God might have chosen whether he would ever have made the World or any Creature, whereby his Existence might have been made known; he might have concealed himself and his Being to all Eternity. Wherefore seeing it was only of his good Pleasure that he made Creatures, to whom he might make known himself, might he not take his own Time to do it, and reveal

his Being when he saw good, without giving any Account thereof to his Creatures?

5. Albeit we can discern no Reason why he should discover and make known his Being just then when he did, and neither sooner nor later, yet 'tis possible there might be weighty Reasons for it, which God thought not fit to acquaint us with. Sure we are that he, who is infinitely wise, doth all Things in the best Manner, and in the fittest Season, tho' we may not be able to dive into the Reasons, in respect of which one Season is fitter than another. Tho' we may, and often do, through our Darkness and Ignorance, mis-time our Actions, and mistake the proper Season of them, yet 'tis utterly impossible that he should do it. It behoves us therefore to acquiesce in God's good Pleasure, and to judge that the meetest, and of all other, the best and fittest Season, which the Wisdom of God thought fit to pitch upon, and make choice of.

Obj. 2. If God was before the World, and before there was any Thing in Being besides himself; if there was nothing but himself from Eternity, 'till the Beginning of the World, which was less

less than six thousand Years since, how did he, or could he take up and employ himself in that boundless and unmeasurable Space of infinite Duration? saith the Atheist.

A. This is a Question as wretchedly Profane and Impious, and as daringly Bold and Presumptuous as the former, or rather worse, if it be possible. But

1. What hath any mortal Man, any Creature to do to be enquiring what God did before he made the World, when from Eternity there was nothing but himself in Being? What Warrant have you to be prying into that, which he hath thought fit to reserve to himself, and to keep within his own Breast. *Secret Things belong unto the Lord, but Things revealed to us, and to our Children to do them.* If God had judged them needful, or fit to be known by us, he would have revealed them to us; but seeing he hath not reveal'd them, we may thence conclude, that 'tis not only safe for us to be ignorant of them, but sinful and prejudicial to be inquisitive after them.

2. God himself is an infinite Object, adequate and commensurate to his infinite Understanding; if there had been

nothing else but the infinite Perfections of his own Nature, these had been sufficient Matter for his Contemplations from all Eternity. He had enough within himself to keep up his Thoughts; he needed not, as the Creatures, to go out of himself to fetch in Matter, to be the Object of his Contemplations.

3. He had moreover in his Thoughts, and as the Objects both of his Understanding, and of his Will, and eternal Purposes, whatever he designed and intended to bring to pass and effect, both in this World, and in that which is to come, even all the future Transactions of infinitely more Millions of Years, than there are Sands in the vast Globe of the whole Earth. And among other Things which he was taken up with, (as the Father said well) he was contriving and preparing Hell, for the just Punishment of such curious Inquisitors, as cannot content themselves with the Knowledge of Things revealed, but must be foolhardily and audaciously Prying into those secret Counsels of God, which he hath on Purpose hid from their Eyes.

Obj. 3. Never any Man saw God, saith the Atheist, and therefore what sufficient Evidence can any Man have
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that there is a God ? We are told so, and we have it by hearsay ; and so we are told many Things that are meerly Fabulous, and deserve not to be received as true.

A. 1. That God is not seen by our bodily Eye, is, because being of a spiritual Nature, he cannot be the Object of our external Senses. 'Tis from the Perfection of his Nature, that he cannot be seen by us, as Bodies and material Objects may.

2. Tho' he be not to be seen by our Bodily Eyes, yet he is visible by the Eye of our Understanding. We can most certainly conclude, by the Use of our Reason, and by the discourse of our Minds, that there is such a one. He hath both imprinted the Characters and Notions of himself upon our Minds, and engraven himself, and as it were, written his Name upon all the Creatures. There is nothing we see but proclaims the Being of God ; every Herb in the Field, every living Creature, even the least and most contemptible Worm, if well considered and looked into, declares him to us. All the foremention'd Arguments prove his Existence, and make it so manifest and conspicuous to our

our Understandings, that nothing can be more. We must be wilfully blind, and put out the Eyes of our Reason, if we will not see and acknowledge him. And is not all this enough to satisfy us that he is, unless we may also see him with our Bodily Eyes?

2. You say, no Man ever saw him, and therefore you cannot believe him to be; you want sufficient Ground for your Belief: But how many other Things are there which the Eye of your Body never saw, nor can see, and yet you firmly believe to exist, and make no Question of their Being? Who ever saw his own Soul? And yet he believes and is well assur'd that there is such a Principle of Life and Motion, and Activity within him; for he certainly concludes there is and must be such a Principle from the Operations and Effects of it. No Man ever saw his own Thoughts, and yet nothing is more evident to him than that he thinks. No Man ever saw his own Understanding, and yet he knows himself to be endued with such a Faculty, because he understands the Things that are presented to him. So in Things of another Nature, a Man that never saw *Vienna*, or *Constantinople*,
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or *Aleppo*, or *Smyna*; that never saw either *Japan* in the *East-Indies*, or *Mexico* in the *West*, yet certainly knows there are such Places, and doth not in the least question it.

3. The Atheist himself pretends to believe many Things, which he cannot discern by the Eye of his Body. He says he believes there is no God; and yet that Proposition, that there is no God, was never the Object of his bodily Eyes. He believes the World to be eternal, and yet his Eye-Sight never informed him thereof; or he talks of Atoms, of their nimble Motion, of their meeting and prying one another; of their casual Uniting, and Composing the Bodies we behold; and yet he never saw these Atoms, nor their Motions, nor their Meeting and Closing with one another, in order to the making up of the Things we see. These idle Dreams and groundless Fancies, this Man gives out for Realities, and affirms them to be, with highest Confidence; and yet he cannot say that his Eyes ever saw one of them. The Truth is, he hath a Mind there should be no God, because he is afraid of being accountable to him; and therefore he greedily catches at any
Thing,

Thing, how weak soever, to make it an Argument to perswade himself that there is none: He never saw him with his bodily Eyes, and therefore he must not Be, tho' there be a Thousand other Things which have a real Existence, tho' no Man's bodily Eye ever discern'd, or could discern them, they being not the Object of his outward Senses.

And so much concerning the Arguments and Evidence, that even right Reason affords for proving the Existence of God. It now remains that I should make some brief Improvement thereof by way of Application, before I proceed to speak of the Attributes of God. And here,

1. There being so many Demonstrations of the Existence of God, how Horrid is the Sin of those, who, notwithstanding all this Evidence of the Being of God, deny him, wilfully putting out their Eyes, or shutting them against the Light; yea making use of, and employing that excellent Faculty of Reason and Understanding, which God hath endued them with, to prove there is no God; and not only so, but to reproach and blaspheme the Name of God, and scoff at the Notion of such a Being.
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Neither are these wicked Miscreants content to have endeavour'd to persuade themselves that there is no God, but they also make it their Business to instil these pernicious and destructive Principles into the Minds of others with whom they converse, scattering the Seeds of Atheism in all Places where they come. Thus they do their utmost to banish the Belief of a God out of the World, to erase the Notions of him out of the Minds of Men, and to people the Earth with a cursed Crew of Atheists that own no Superior Being, that give Law to themselves, and live as they list, making their own Wills and Lusts the only Measure and Rule of their Actions. O the infinite Patience of God, who suffers these wretched Creatures to live, and doth not presently cut them off, and send them immediately to Hell, to be convinc'd of the Being of God, by the Torments which his revenging Hand inflicts on them for their Sins! And O the terrible Vengeance that awaits these professed Enemies of God, when the Day of God's Patience towards them shall be ended!

2. As the Speculative Atheist, who professeth to believe there is no God, is
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at present in a fearful Estate, and must, without Repentance, expect to be in the other World, a most dreadful Object of God's vindictive Justice, to Eternity : So the Condition of the practical Atheist that professeth the Belief of a God, but in his Works denies him, is little better, or rather in some respect worse. For a Man that believes there is a God, to live as if he verily believed the contrary ; to order his Life and Conversation, as if he were perswaded that there is neither God, nor Heaven, nor Hell, neither Reward, nor Punishment after this Life, what is this but wilfully and desperately to run upon his own Destruction, and knowingly to make himself eternally miserable ? How is it possible that a Man, professing to believe there is a God, a righteous Judge of the World, that will render to every Man according to his Works, should either affront God, or wrong his own Soul more ? And what greater Madness can there be, than for a Man thus to act directly contrary both to his Reason and highest Interest ? And yet how common a Case is this ? And how full is the World of such Instances, of Men that professing themselves to be Christians, live like Atheists,

Atheists, giving themselves up as freely and fully to all Manner of Lewdness and Debauchery, as if the great Truths of the Christian Religion were no more to be heeded than idle Dreams or Fables, and as if the Atheist's Creed rather deserved our Belief than the Apostle's. For such as go under the Name of Christians, to lead a vicious and profligate Life, to allow themselves in Swearing, and Cursing, and excessive Drinking, and scoffing at Religion, and all Manner of Filthiness and Uncleaness; or to Lye, and Cheat, and Dissemble, and Oppress, and deal Falsly, Treacherously, and Injuriouly with their Neighbours, making no Conscience of performing their Promises, Oaths, or Contracts, but venturing to break all Bonds, Engagements, Obligations, where it may be for their private Interest and Advantage, what could the rankest Atheist do more, tho' he should act to the Height of his atheistical Principles? And yet what Place almost is there, where there are not Swarms of such Persons as these? What do these People think of themselves? Do they fancy they shall fare the better because they are not Atheists in Opinion, but believe there is a God, who

who will hereafter call Men to an Account, and proportion Rewards and Punishments according to their Carriage here? O let them not flatter themselves with such Hopes. When they come to appear before the Judge of the World, they shall find, that their sound Belief and right Apprehensions in Matters of Religion, shall stand them in no other Stead, than to condemn them with a more dreadful Condemnation, because their vicious Practices have contradicted their Belief. 'Tis hard to say which of the Two, the speculative or the practical Atheist, when they meet in Hell, shall be more grievously punish'd. The Circumstances of their Sins are different, but perhaps when all Things are consider'd, and weigh'd in a righteous Balance, there may be little Difference between the Punishments which they shall be adjudged unto. However it be, it highly concerns them both, to make their Peace with God, before they go hence and are no more seen. The other World is no Place for Repentance, but for unutterable and endless Regret, that having had Space allotted them to repent they repented not, and that such a Jewel of inestimable Price, was sometime

time in the Hand of Fools, that had not a Heart to make a right use of it.

It follows now, that I should treat of the Attributes of God, but that being so very copious a Subject, and having in this Place discoursed of several of them largely upon other Scriptures, I shall content my self here only to mention a few Particulars, that relate to the Attributes of God in general. By the Attributes of God, we are to understand those Excellencies and Perfections which belong to the divine Nature, as Justice, Mercy, Truth, and the like; which are called the Attributes of God, because they are attributed, or ascrib'd unto him. And indeed these Attributes contain upon the Matter, all that we know of God; by them we apprehend the Nature of God, and frame in our Minds right Conceptions, and true Notions of him. From the sound Knowledge and firm Belief of these his Attributes, are all those Influences deriv'd, which the Sense of a Deity hath upon the Hearts and Lives of Men. To know that there is a God signifies little, operates nothing upon Men, until they know, in some Measure what a God he is, and that he is such a one, as by his Attributes he

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hath discover'd himself to be. Now concerning the Attributes of God in general, all that I shall need to say farther is this.

1. That all the Attributes of God are essential to him. They are all of the very Nature of God, and so the same with him; according to that known Axiom, *Quicquid est in Deo, est Deus*. In Man, Wildom, and Power, and Justice, and Fidelity, are accidental Perfections, but they are not so in God, *Whatsoever is in God, is God*. And hence it follows, that all the Attributes of God are infinite, and eternal, and unchangeable, as He himself is. His Power is infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and so are his Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, and all the rest of the divine Attributes. Tho' some of God's Attributes, as to the Acts and Exercise of them, respect the Creatures, yet in themselves consider'd, and as they imply in God a Disposition and Inclination to those Acts, supposing a proper Object, they are of the very Nature and Essence of God. As for Example, Mercy in God respects the Creature, and properly the Creature in Misery. Now tho' it be true, that there could be no external Act
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or Exercise of Mercy, till there was a Creature to be the Object of it, yet as Mercy in God implies a Disposition and Inclination to shew Mercy, supposing a fit Object of Mercy, so it is essential to God, and eternal, as He himself is. And the same must be said of God's Justice, Truth, and other Attributes respecting the Creature.

2. The Knowledge of the Attributes of God, at least some Knowledge of them is necessary. It were as good almost, that a Man should be wholly ignorant of God, as to be only acquainted with his Name, and to know nothing of his Attributes, that is to say, of his Nature. Yea, a Man that is ignorant of God's Attributes, may have such false and wrong Notions of God, as that it were better that he knew nothing of him at all, than to lie under such dangerous Mistakes and Misapprehensions of him.

3. Tho' some Knowledge of God's Attributes be necessary, yet cannot any one of them be perfectly understood by us. The Reason hereof we had before; they all being essential to God, are infinite, and so cannot be fully comprehended by our finite and narrow Understandings.

4. Whereas

The Sixth Sermon.

4. Whereas some of these Attributes are incommunicable, belonging only to God, and others are communicable to the Creatures; even those that are in some Sense communicable to the Creatures, are not so in them, as they are in God. And this also is evident from what hath been said. For Example, Wisdom, Justice, and Holiness are found in the Creatures, but far otherwise than they are in God. For

1. In God they are essential Perfections, but in the Creatures they are accidental.

2. In God they are infinite, but finite in the Creature.

3. In God they are unchangeable, but not so in the Creature. In a Word, there are in the Creatures only some weak and imperfect Shadows and Resemblances of those transcendent Perfections that are in God. And this may suffice to have been spoken in general concerning the Attributes of God.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

Rom. ix. Ver. 5.

*Whose are the Fathers, and
of whom as concerning the
Flesh Christ came, who is
over all, God blessed for ever.
Amen.*

THE Apostle in this and the preceding Verse, reckons up the many Privileges and Prerogatives with which God had dignified the Jewish Nation above all others; which are Nine in Number. Seven he mentions in the Fourth Verse. *Who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises:* and Two in the Text, *Whose are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the Flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.*

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1. Who

The Seventh Sermon.

1. Who are *Israelites*, that is, descended from *Israel*, or *Jacob*, who was called *Israel*, upon occasion of his wrestling and prevailing with God, *Gen.* 32. 28.

2. To whom pertaineth the Adoption, that is, he chose them alone out of all the Nations of the Earth, to be his peculiar People, *Amos* 3. 2.

3. And the Glory, that is, the Ark of the Testimony, which was a Sign of God's gracious Presence among them, called the Glory, *1 Sam.* 4. 21. and *Psf.* 78. 61.

4. And the Covenants, that is, those several Repetitions and Renewings of God's Covenant to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, which we meet with in the History of their Lives.

5. And the giving of the Law. With what Majesty and Solemnity, Dread and Terror it was given, we read *Ex.* 19.

6. And the Service of God, that is, the publick legal Worship instituted by God, consisting in Sacrifices, Incense, and other ceremonial Observances.

7. And the Promises, that is, such as were occasionally made, but without those Solemnities which the forementioned Covenants with the Patriarchs, were

were accompanied with. Promises of outward Blessings upon Condition of their Obedience, Blessings in their Persons, Estates, Relations, &c. and Promises of the *Messiah*, and all Manner of spiritual Blessings under his Kingdom.

These are the Seven Privileges, with which the Nation of the *Jews* was dignified, contain'd in the Verse immediately preceding the Text.

In the Text we have Two Privileges more, *Whose are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the Flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

1. *Whose are the Fathers*, that is, whose Progenitors were the Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob* and Others; Men famous in their Generations for their Faith, intimate Converse with God, and for the signal Testimonies he had vouchsafed them of his Favour, &c.

2. *Of whom as concerning the Flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.* This last Privilege of the *Jews* is that which I purpose to confine my self to. And here there are two Things,

1. An Assertion, and an affirmative Proposition, that *Christ came of the Jews*, and the Restriction or Limitation there-

of in those Terms, *As concerning the Flesh*, whereby we are given to understand, that whereas there are two Natures in the Person of Christ, the divine Nature and the human, Christ came of the *Jews* according to his human Nature only, not according to his divine Nature. According to his divine Nature, he was not only before the Virgin *Mary* his Mother was born, but before the Fathers, the Patriarchs last mention'd, as he affirmeth concerning himself, *John* 8. 58. *Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.* Neither only before *Abraham*, (tho' that be all which in that Place he affirms in answer to the *Jews*, who had been speaking of *Abraham*) but before *Adam*, before the Foundations of the World were laid, his Father and he being one, *Joh.* 10. 30. and by Consequence he being co-eternal with his Father. But of this more hereafter in its proper Place.

Three Things are here to be spoken to: That Christ is truly Man, that he descended from the Nation of the *Jews*, and that this was a great and honourable Privilege of that People.

1. Christ is truly Man; for by *Flesh* here we are to understand the whole human
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man Nature, according to the usual Acceptation of the Term Flesh in Scripture. *All Flesh had corrupted his Way upon the Earth, Gen. 6. 12.* that is, all Mankind. *Except those Days should be shortened, there should no Flesh be saved, Matth. 24. 22.* that is, unless God should shorten those Days of Tribulation, that were coming upon the Jews, none of that Nation would remain, but they would all be destroy'd. That Christ is truly Man may appear several Ways.

1. From the Promises, Prophecies, and Predictions concerning him in the Old Testament: The very first Mention that was made of him in the Sentence, which God passed upon the Serpent, *Gen. 3. 15.* calls him the Seed of the Woman: *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel:* Where by the Seed of the Woman we are principally to understand Christ, who was to be her Seed eminently, tho' also all true Believers, who are mystically one with him. He was to be the Seed of *Abraham, Gen. 12. 3.* *In thy Seed shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed,* that is, in Christ, who should descend from him.
To

The Seventh Sermon.

To the same Purpose is that Promise recorded, *Dent. 18. 18. That he would raise up a Prophet to his People from among their brethren, like unto Moses*, which *St. Peter Acts 3. 22.* interprets of, and applies unto Christ. This great Prophet was to be raised up to them from among their Brethren, and to be like unto *Moses*, that is, he should be truly Man, of the same human Nature together with them. Add hereunto that Prophecy of Christ to be born of a Virgin, *Is. 7. 14. Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son* : and that other Prophecy concerning his Birth, *Is. 9. 6. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given* ; from both which the same Truth is manifest, that according to the Promises and Prophecies of the Old Testament, Christ was to be truly Man.

2. This is further evident from many clear Testimonies of Scripture in the New Testament, *Joh. 1. 14. The Word*, that is, that Word which was in the Beginning, and *was God*, v. 1. that same Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us. *Gal. 4. 4, 5. When the Fulness of Time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law.*

Law. His Son made of a Woman, and made under the Law, that is, made Man by the Assumption of the human Nature into his divine Person; and thereupon made subject to the Law, which was made for Man, and unto which all Men as such, are in Subjection. *Heb. 2. 16. Verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham.* Hereunto may be added those Scriptures of the New Testament, in which the Stile and Appellation of Man is so often given him. Such as are, *1 Tim. 2. 7. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. Acts 17. 31. God hath appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by the Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given Assurance, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts 2. 22 Jesus of Nazareth a Man approved of God, among you, by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs.* Hence also that Appellation of the Son of Man, so frequently given him in the Evangelists. Briefly, his Conception, Birth, Life, and Death, so largely insisted on and described by the Penmen of the Gospels, do abundantly manifest that he was truly Man, and not meerly in Shape,

Shape, or outward Appearance, as some old Hereticks vainly dreamed. *In all Points he was made like unto us, Sin only excepted. Hebr. 4. 15.*

Use 1. See then and admire the infinite Love and Condescension of the eternal Son of God.

1. In that he was pleased so far to humble himself, as to take our Nature upon him, and not the Nature of Angels, who are far more excellent Creatures.

2. That he would be pleased to take our Nature on him, after we had sully'd and defil'd it; after we had defac'd God's Image imprinted thereon by Creation, and stamp'd the Image of the Devil upon it.

3. That he was pleased to take our Nature, together with all the natural Infirmities thereof.

4. And all this purely upon our Account, and to the End he might thereby put himself into a Capacity of giving himself as a Ransome for us, and by his Death of delivering us from the Wrath to come, and of purchasing for us everlasting Bliss and Happiness.

Use 2.

Use 2. This should teach us to imitate our Saviour, in being willing to stoop and condescend to undergo the lowest, the meanest Services, by which we may be any way helpful to others. How unwilling are we to disparage our selves, as our proud and haughty Spirits account it, by stooping a little, that we may the better reach forth our Assistance to those who are beneath us. Had the Son of God been like us, had he stood upon his Terms as we do, when the Work of our Redemption was to be undertaken, what had become of all us to Eternity? We are much mistaken, if we look upon our Condescension as our Disparagement. He that stoops lowest to do Offices of Love and Service to others, doth thereby raise himself highest; for 'tis not his Disparagement, but his Honour, thus to condescend.

Use 3. This is a ground of great Encouragement to humbled Sinners. They are wont to be possessed with many strong Fears, that Christ will not receive them. But he who hath done so much, in order to the Salvation of Sinners, he who came down from Heaven for that Purpose,

pose, he who vouchsafed so far to abase himself, as to be made Flesh, by taking the human Nature, with all its Infirmities, into his glorious Person, and that to this very End, that he might be a Propitiation for the Sins of the World, and that being made a Curse for us, he might redeem us from the Curse of the Law; he who hath done all this out of his Compassion to Sinners, how can he be supposed to be unwilling to Entertain truly humbled Sinners, when, in the Sense of their Sin and Misery, they come unto him for Relief? Could he have given the World a greater Proof, a fuller Demonstration of his Readiness to Relieve Sinners, than he hath herein given? After all that he hath done for Promoting our Salvation, it were the highest Injury imaginable to his Love, if we should still harbour Prejudices against him, as if he had not that tender Pity and Compassion to Sinners, which might encourage us to come unto him, with Expectation of those Succours from him, which the sad Condition of our undone and perishing Souls requires. Would a wise Man, and a true-hearted, faithful and affectionate Friend, take a long Journey into a remote Country, and

and therein expose himself to many Hazards and Difficulties, that he might do his Friend a Kindness, and succour him in his Adversity; and after all this, Frown upon him at last, and by no Entreaties or Importunity be prevail'd with to do that for his distressed Friend, for which so long and tedious a Journey was undertaken? 'Tis the very same Case between Christ and us: that he should shew himself strange, and difficult, and averse, and inexorable; one that by no Entreaties would be prevail'd with to shew Mercy to Sinners, after that he hath come from Heaven, and taken our Nature on him on Purpose to save Sinners, this were wholly inconsistent both with his Wisdom and Love. Wherefore as often as this Temptation surprizeth us, as often as we begin to question his gracious Inclinations to shew Compassion to Sinners, let us remember what Assurance he hath given us of his Readiness to succour them, by taking Man's Nature upon him to that End; a Work so strange and full of Wonder, and a Condescension so admirable, that he who shall consider it, must either not believe it, or be enforc'd to acknowledge, that there must be in him,

him, who thus abased and humbled himself, that matchless Love, and those Bowels of Compassion to Sinners, as 'tis impossible he should cast out any, who in a due Manner come unto him, and implore his Mercy.

Say not, O say not therefore thou disconsolate and dejected Soul, Christ hath no Mercy for such a one as I am, I must never expect to find Grace in his Eyes; I may seek it where I will, but I must never hope to obtain it. Hath he done so great, so wonderful a Thing, as to vouchsafe to become Man for Sinners; and will he reject poor Sinners coming unto him for the Pardon of their Sins, and the Renewing of their Natures by sanctifying Grace? Coming to him to do that for them, for which he came into the World? Never entertain such a Thought of him. It can no more be, that he should deny Mercy to those, who seek it sincerely and earnestly, than that he should deny himself, and put off his merciful and gracious Nature; than that he should disclaim the Purpose of his coming into the World, and act quite contrary to the Office of Mediator between God and Man, which he hath undertaken.

Use 4.

Use 4. This also, that he is become Man, may encourage us to draw near unto him with Boldness and Confidence in all our Distresses of what kind soever. And there are several Grounds of this Encouragement.

1. He is Man, of the same human Nature with our selves, as well as God ; God indeed, but God incarnate, God manifested in the Flesh, in our Flesh ; and as Man, in this our very Nature, he is at the Right-hand of God, and sits upon the Throne of Grace, to dispense and give out Mercy unto all who sue unto him for it. If we had to do with God only , his glorious and terrible Majesty might affright us ; but when we represent him to our selves as *Immanuel, God with us*, God in our own Nature, and cloathed with our Flesh, this gives us access unto him with boldness, and makes our approaches more comfortable. What *Elihu* said to *Job*, *Job* 33. 6, 7. *Behold I am according to thy Wish, I also am formed out of the Clay, that is, I am a Man as thou art ; behold my Terrour shall not make thee afraid ;* the same in Effect doth the human Nature of Christ, or the Man Christ Jesus, seem to say to us for our Encouragement.

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2. He is not only Man, but a Man of the most meek, kind, and merciful Disposition; a Man full of Love, Tender-heartedness, and Compassion; a Man most easy to be entreated, most willing and ready to shew Favour to such as make their Addresses to him. Such a one, in all his Converses with Men here upon Earth, and in the whole Course of his Life, he always manifested himself to be. There are those among Men, who are hard-hearted and unmerciful, who are proud, and sour, and sullen, who are of difficult Access, and hard to be entreated; who are of *Nabal's* Temper, of so churlish a Disposition, as they are not to be spoken to. But the human Nature of Christ hath none of those uncouth Humors, or sinful Distempers, with which we are burthen'd and encumber'd. He took our Nature on him, and not our sinful Infirmities. He took our Nature and adorn'd it with the highest Perfection of all those lovely, and amiable Graces, which might dispose him to shew Mercy, and encourage us to expect it from him. And in that his most gracious Disposition as Man, he also shews us how he stands affected towards us as God;

God; for those Graces shining forth in the human Nature, are but the Image of the divine.

3. Besides all this, there is yet one Thing more in his being Man, to encourage us to come to him with Confidence of obtaining Mercy, and finding Grace to help in Time of Need. He took our Nature on him, with all our natural Infirmities, and was in all Points *tempted like as we are, yet without Sin, Heb. 4. 15.* and that to this end, *That he might be a merciful High-priest, not untouched with the Feeling of our Infirmities,* but sensible of our Condition by his own. *Heb. 2. 17, 18. Heb. 4. 15.* There is nothing that better frames our Hearts, or more kindly disposeth us to shew Pity and Compassion to others, and to Succour them as we are able, than the Experience which we our selves have had of the same Calamities and Sufferings under which they groan. *Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco,* said she, in the Poet. Wherefore God, the better to engage his People to shew Kindness unto Strangers, and to refrain from all oppressive and injurious Carriages towards them, puts them in Mind of their own former Condition, when Strangers

in Egypt. Thou shalt neither vex a Stranger nor oppress him ; for ye were Strangers in the Land of Egypt. Exod. 22. 21. And again Chap. 23. 9. Thou shalt not oppress a Stranger, for ye know the Heart of a Stranger.

Ye know, by your own Experience, the Sorrows, Troubles, Fears, and Hazards of Strangers ; ye know how near the Heart of Strangers it goes, when they meet with Affronts and Injuries in a foreign Country, where they have no Friend to stand by, or protect them.

So Christ knows the Hearts of those who are buffeted by *Satan*, as having been tempted himself, and therefore as the Apostle saith *Heb. 2. 18. In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted ;* he is able to do it Feelingly, Tenderly, and Compassionately. Christ knows the Hearts of those who are reproached and reviled, who are wrongfully judged and censured, who are evil entreated, shamefully used and persecuted for Righteousness Sake, as having drunk deeply of this Cup himself : Christ knows the Hearts of those who are conflicting with the Sense of God's Wrath ; of those who
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are under present Desertions, from whom God withdraws the Light of his Countenance, and hides away his Face; for he himself hath been in that dark Condition, which made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

In all these Cases and Conditions, we need not question but we shall obtain of Christ all that seasonable and suitable Help, Relief and Comfort, which may be expected from one, who in the Days of his Flesh had experience in himself of those very Sufferings and Sorrows which we labour under.

Neither may we think, that the Ascension of Christ, and his sitting at the Right-hand of his Father, hath alter'd the Case of him. As he is still Man, of the same Nature with us, now that he is in Heaven; so he hath as much Tenderness, Pity, and Commiseration for us, as he ever shew'd when he was here on Earth.

His Exaltation hath not abated or lessened his Graces, a Part whereof consisted in his tender Love, and Bowels of Compassion towards the Sons of Men. Go to him then, go boldly to him in all your Distresses, as unto one who

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besides his most kind, gentle, and amiable Disposition, and his gracious Inclinations to shew Mercy, hath also the Advantage of an experimental Knowledge of our Sorrows, having *been a Man of Sorrows himself, and acquainted with Grief, Is. 53. 3.* and so must needs be in that respect the fitter and readier to Succour those, who in their Distresses fly to him for Relief.

Be not dis-hearten'd, tho' Christ be now in Heaven, tho' he be now sitting at the Right-hand of the Majesty on high, Crown'd with Glory and Honour, yet let not the Lustre of his glorious Person discourage you from making your humble Approaches unto him, let not his Terror make you afraid; he is still the Man *Christ Jesus*; he is one who, in regard of his partaking of the same human Nature with us, is not ashamed to call us Brethren, *Heb. 2. 11.* he is one who hath been here below in this Valley of Tears, where we are, and still remembers what 'tis to conflict with Difficulties, Temptations and Troubles, what 'tis to have the Light of God's Countenance eclipsed, and his Face hidden from us; what 'tis to endure all manner of Affronts, Injuries, and Con-
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traditions from Sinners; and after all other contumelious and reproachful Indignities, what 'tis to Die a most painful, ignominious, and shameful Death. He with whom we have to do, how highly exalted, how great and glorious soever otherwise he be, yet is no Stranger to these Things, and therefore knows how to tender and commiserate his in all these, and other such like Distresses and Exigencies.

Use 5. This informs us of the high Advancement of the human Nature in Christ, being taken into the Person of the Son of God, and hypostatically or personally United to it; that is, so United as to be one Person with it. This is a deep and wonderful Mystery; but that is not the Thing I am now insisting on: I am speaking of the high Honour and Advancement of the human Nature by this Union. It was a great Honour to *Adam*, that he was Created after the Image of God, and that above all the visible Creatures he resembled his Maker, and bare the Impressions and Characters of the divine Perfections upon his Nature. It's a great Honour to be advanc'd to the high Privilege of

being the Sons of God. It's a great Honour to be spiritually United to Christ, and to be the Members of his mystical Body. It's a great Honour to be hereafter admitted to the immediate Vision and Enjoyment of God ; to be Heirs of Glory, and to reign with Christ in the Kingdom of his Father to Eternity. All these are exceeding great Things to be conferr'd upon those who are but Dust and Ashes, as *Abraham* saith of himself. But all these great Things put together, do not crown the human Nature with that Glory and Honour, nor exalt it to that height of Dignity, as doth the Assumption of it into the most glorious Person of the eternal Son of God, to be One with it ; Personally One with it, and to subsist with no other Subsistence than that with which the Son himself subsisteth.

That we may the better understand how highly the human Nature is advanc'd by this its personal Union to the Son of God ; Consider,

1. The Nearness of this Union. A more close, or entire Union there could not be, than to be one and the same Person. That the human Nature should be converted or turn'd into the divine
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Nature, is absolutely impossible. The Creature can no more be made God, than God, Blessed for ever, can cease to be God, and become a Creature. Besides, if that were supposed, that the human Nature were turn'd into the divine Nature, there would then be no Place for any Union between the two Natures ; for the human Nature upon that Supposition would cease to be, or be as it were so swallow'd up of the divine Nature, that there would then be in the Person of Christ, only one Nature, that is, the divine Nature, and no other. So then supposing an Union of Two distinct Natures, the divine and the human Nature in the Person of Christ, what more entire Union can be imagin'd, than that those Two distinct Natures should be so closely United, as to be but one Person ? There is no Instance that can possibly be given of any Union more close than this. The Union of Believers to Christ, and their Conjunction with him as Members of the same mystical Body, whereof he is the Head, is a near and glorious Union ; but 'tis far short of the personal Union of the human Nature to the Son of God : For still, notwithstanding the mystical
Union

Union of Christ and his Members, Believers continue to be Personally distinguish'd from one another, and from Christ. As Christ, so is every Believer a distinct Person by himself.

2. Consider the Distance of the two Natures united in the Person of Christ: God and Man, the Creator and the Creature, Infinite and Finite, meet in one Person. If a great Prince should vouchsafe to be Married to a Person of the meanest Quality, he would thereby do much Honour to that Person and her Family. But what Comparison is there of the Distance between the greatest Prince in the World, and a Beggar, with the infinite Distance that is between God and his Creature? Again, what Comparison is there with the relative Union between the Husband and the Wife, and the personal Union of the two Natures in Christ? Tho' the Man and Woman be in some Sense one Flesh, yet how loose is the conjugal Knot, the Tie between the Husband and the Wife, if compared with the close and entire Conjunction of the divine and human Nature in Christ, by the personal Union! And therefore if a Person of mean Quality
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be so Dignify'd and Honour'd by Matching with a Prince, what Honour is it to the human Nature, to be as it were Married to the divine Nature, by the wonderful and ineffable Bond of the hypostatical or personal Union?

3. Consider the Incommunicability of this Honour to any Creature, besides the human Nature. 'Tis through God's free Grace, the sole Honour and Pre-eminence of the human Nature to be thus advanced; an Honour not communicated to the glorious and spotless Angels of Light. Tho' in respect of the Excellency of their Nature, they are much above Man, yet in this respect is Man above them. Their Nature was never as Man's, Personally united to the Son of God.

4. Consider the immediate Result and Consequents of this Union, and the Honour that thence redounds to the human Nature. In regard of the near Conjunction of the two Natures, and their personal Union, the human Nature doth in some sense Share in the Honour of those great Things, which could not be done, but by the Power of the divine Nature. To give an Instance in one or two Particulars; the mediating

ting between God and his sinful Creatures, the making Peace between God and Man, and Reconciling the one to the other, is a Work too great to be undertaken by any meer Creature ; and yet the human Nature hath its Portion in this Honour ; *There is one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. 1 Tim. 2. 7.* Again, the Judging of the World is certainly one of the most glorious Transactions of Christ, and yet shall this great Affair be managed by the Man whom God hath ordain'd. *Acts 17. 31.* And as for all other great Things atchiev'd by Christ as Mediator, they all in this respect dart some Rays of Honour upon the human Nature, that they were done by that Person, who is both God and Man. The great and honourable Exploits of the Husband, reflect some Honour upon the Wife, yea tho' she contributed nothing towards the Performance of them. The Comparison indeed is far beneath the Thing I am speaking of ; but tho' it doth not reach it, yet it may serve to illustrate it. We have seen the high Advancement of the human Nature, by being taken into the glorious Person of the Son of God. Let us hence learn,

1. With

1. With all humble Reverence and Thankfulness to acknowledge and adore this transcendent Favour of God towards the Sons of Men. Who were we, sinful Dust and Ashes, the Shame of the whole visible Creation, that God should pass by Thousands, and Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousands of Angels, the most glorious Creatures that he ever made, and cast such an Eye of Favour upon us, as to take our Nature and unite it to himself. Surely it concerns us to take up *Mary's* Language, and say with her, *Our Souls magnify the Lord, and our Spirits rejoice in God our Saviour, who hath regarded the low Estate of his sinful and unworthy Creatures; for he that is mighty hath done great Things for us.*

2. Let us take heed how we dishonour and debase this our Nature by Sin, which God hath so highly dignified and exalted.

Hitherto of the first Thing propounded, That Christ was truly Man :

The second Thing now follows, That according to his human Nature he came of the *Jews*. For Proof hereof, little need be added to what hath already been deliver'd under the former Head, divers
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of the same Passages of Scripture, which prove him to be truly Man, proving him also to be descended from the *Jews*. The very first Clause of his Genealogy, *Matth. 1. 1.* reports him to be the Offspring of *David* and *Abraham*; which two Persons are therefore mentioned, because to them both special Promises were made, that the Messiah or the Christ should spring from them. To *Abraham* God promised, and confirm'd it by an Oath, *Gen. 22. 16, 17, 18.* *That he would multiply his Seed as the Stars of the Heaven, and as the Sand which is upon the Sea-Shore, and that in his Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be blessed;* that is, in Christ, who should descend from him. Which Promise God had also before made to him, *Gen. 12. 3.* And as for his Descent from *David*, God promised him, that *when his Days should be fulfilled, and he should sleep with his Fathers, he would set up his Seed after him, which should proceed out of his Bowels, and that he would establish the Throne of his Kingdom for ever. 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 16.* So also *Pf. 89. 34, 35, 36.* *My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of my Lips; once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David,*

David, his Seed shall endure for ever, and his Throne as the Sun before me. Now this Promise, touching the Stability and Perpetuity of David's Throne, in relation to his Posterity, must be understood with Reference to Christ, and as having its full Accomplishment in him. So the Angel, sent to the Virgin Mary, interprets and applies this Promise. Acquainting her with the Conception and Birth of Christ: Behold, saith he, thou shalt conceive in thy Womb and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his Name Jesus; he shall be great, and be call'd the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no End. Luk. 1. 31, 32, 33. Moreover Christ himself, in respect of his lineal Descent from David, and his Succession in David's Throne, is in the Language of the Prophets call'd David. They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will set over them. Jer. 30. 9. This Promise was made, and deliver'd by Jeremiah, from the Mouth of the Lord, many Hundred Years after David was gather'd to his Fathers, and therefore must be interpreted of Christ, who
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was to be the Son of *David*, and to succeed him in his Throne, tho' in a spiritual Sense. And thus must divers Places in the Prophecy of the Prophet *Ezekiel* be understood. *I will set up one Shepherd over my Flock, and he shall feed them, even my Servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my Servant David a Prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. Ezek. 34. 23, 24.* Again, *David my Servant shall be King over them, and they shall have one Shepherd; and they shall dwell in the Land, wherein their Fathers have dwelt, even they and their Children, and their Childrens Children for ever, and my Servant David shall be their Prince for ever. Ezek. 37. 24, 25.* In which Scriptures, under the Name of *David*, Christ must of Necessity be understood; for what other Prince could there be of whom it might be affirm'd, that should Reign for ever? This his Descent from *David*, is frequently mention'd in the New Testament. *Rom. 1. 1, 3. Paul a Servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the Seed of David according to the Flesh. Rev. 5. 5. he is stiled, The Lion of the*

tive, a singular Privilege of the Nation of the *Jews*, that Christ came of them, rather than of any other Nation of the World. 'Tis deservedly counted a great Honour to any Place or People, that famous and excellent Persons have been born in it, or sprung from it. Hence Cities and Nations have been wont to strive and contend with one another, to draw and appropriate to themselves, the Honour of having given Birth to such eminent Persons. How many Places have ambitiously claim'd the same famous Person as theirs, with much Earnestness, pleading the Grounds of their Claim to him, and by all the colourable Pretensions and Arguments they could muster up, endeavouring to inhaunce the Honour thereof to themselves, and to exclude any other from challenging an Interest therein. Neither is this meerly a vain Humour of the World: The Scripture makes the Birth and Descent of great and worthy Persons an Honour to those from whom they descend. The Psalmist, speaking of God's special Favour to *Zion*, saith, *The Lord loveth the Gates of Zion more than all the Dwellings of Jacob: Glorious Things are spoken of thee, O City of God.*
Pf. 87.

Pf. 87. 2, 3. Then a little after, he makes the Birth of eminent Persons, one chief Instance of God's Favour to that Place. *Of Zion it shall be said, this and this Man was born in her; the Lord shall count when he writeth up the People, that this Man was born there. v. 5, 6. Is. 58. 12.* God promiseth it as a singular Favour, and a Reward of the conscientious Performance of the Duties there before-mentioned, that he would raise up Instruments from among them, to be eminently Useful and Serviceable to God and their Generations; *They that shall be of thee, shall build the old waste Places; thou shalt raise up the Foundations of many Generations,* the Foundations that for many Ages have been demolish'd and ruin'd: *And thou shalt be called the Repairer of the Breach, and the Restorer of Paths to dwell in;* thou in thine Offspring, and in those that shall come of thee, shalt have this Honour conferr'd upon thee. To mention but one Scripture more; when God, to aggravate the Sin of *Israel*, reckons up the signal Favours he had vouchsafed them, *Amos 2. 9, 10, 11.* he instanceth in this, as one great Thing which he had done for them, that he had raised up eminent

Persons from among them. *I raised up of your Sons for Prophets, and of your young Men for Nazarites.* Well then, an Honour and Privilege it is, even in God's Account, to be the Place where eminent and worthy Persons have had their Birth, to be the Stock from whence such flourishing Branches have sprung. But never was any People so honoured, by the Birth of any Person descending from them, as the Nation of the *Jews* was by the Birth of Christ. In this Respect, as well as in others it is, that old *Simeon*, holding Christ in his Arms, blessed God, saying, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word; for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the Face of all People; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy People Israel.* *Luk. 2. 29, 30, 31, 32.* The Glory of that People it was, that Christ came of them, whether we consider the Dignity of his Person, or the Greatness of his Atchievements, or the signal Benefits redounding to the Sons of Men by him. These, or some of these, are usually the Things, by which renown'd Persons reflect Honour upon those from whom they had their Original.

1. It

1. It was a great Honour and Privilege of that Nation, that Christ should come of them, in respect of the Eminency of his Person. When God would greatly Favour and Honour *Abraham*, he Promised him, *That Nations and Kings should come of him*, Gen. 17. 6. This was a great Thing, but that he should Descend from him, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19. 16. *Whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom that which shall never be destroyed*, Dan. 7. 14. This is a far greater Matter. What are the greatest Princes, the most illustrious and renown'd Potentates in the World, if compar'd with him who is exalted far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come? *Eph. 1. 21. Who being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. 2. 6. *Who, as in the Text, is over all, God blessed for ever.* This is that glorious Person who, according to the Flesh, was pleased to derive his Descent from that Nation. The Virgin *Mary* is saluted by the Angel, *Hail thou that art highly favoured, the*

Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among Women ; in regard that when the eternal Son of God would vouchsafe to take Man's Nature upon him, he was pleas'd to single out her of all the Women in the World, to be Born of her, and to Honour her with the Title of his Mother, the Mother of her Lord, *Luk. 1. 28.* And the Virgin her self, out of a deep Sense of this high Favour and Vouchsafement, cries out, *My Soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* Her Honour in being the Mother of her Lord, was the Honour of that Nation, and of the House of *David* therein, of which she was a Branch.

2. In respect of the Greatness of his Atchievements, and the glorious Works done by him, which is another Thing that brings Honour to the Place of Man's Birth, and to his Parents or Ancestors from whom he came. To say nothing of Christ's Miracles, which were more than are in Scripture reported to have been wrought by all the Prophets, and other Servants of God, that we read of in all the Old Testament : I say, to speak nothing of these, Christ undertook, and perfected the most difficult,

cult, the most honourable and glorious Enterprize that ever was undertaken. He took upon him to interpose and stand between an angry God, and his sinful Creatures; he took upon him to appease God's Wrath, by making full Satisfaction to his Justice, for the Sins of Men; an Enterprize too difficult for all the Angels in Heaven, who, tho' they should all joyn together, and unite their Strength, and put forth their utmost Abilities, yet could they not tender unto God any thing that might be a valuable and adequate Satisfaction to his Justice, for the Sins of one Man, yea, for any one single Offence, committed against the infinite Majesty of God. He undertook to Vanquish *Satan*, and all the Powers of Hell, and *by Death to destroy him who had the Power of Death, that is the Devil, Hebr. 2. 14.* He undertook to make up that wide Breach, which Sin had made between God and Man; to abolish Death, and restore Life and Immortality; to destroy the Works of the Devil, to abolish Sin, *and to bring in everlasting Righteousness. Dan. 9. 24.*

3. In respect of the Benefits redounding to the Sons of Men by him; and that, whether we consider the Great-

ness and Excellency of those Benefits, or the Largeness and Extent of them.

1. As Touching the Greatness and Excellency of the Benefits, which he hath purchased for us, and confers upon us, what Tongue can express, what Heart can conceive, how great they are? They are such Things, that he hath procur'd and prepar'd for his, as *neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear hath heard, nor have entred into the Heart of Man.*

1 Cor. 2. 9. He purchased and obtain'd for them Pardon of all their Sins, and Peace with God; he hath purchased Grace and Holiness, the Renewing of our Nature, the Repairing of God's Image in us, the Restoring unto us our primitive Integrity, which we had lost by the Fall, the Advancing us to a better Condition than that from which we fell: In a Word, he hath purchased for us everlasting Life, and those unspeakable and endless Joys, the Greatness, the Excellency whereof we can never, in any Measure, understand, until we come to be actually possess'd of them and enjoy them.

2. The Extent and Largeness of these Benefits is such, as adds much to them. Men are much honoured, their Memo-

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ry is precious, their Families are renowned, the Stock from which they sprung is enobled and made famous, by some remarkable Benefits they have conferr'd on, or some great Things which they have done for some particular Town, or City, or Country: but the unspeakable Benefits which Christ hath purchased, and the Fruit of the great Things which he hath done, are not confined, or concluded within such narrow Bounds. The Favours by him procur'd, concern not this or that particular Place only, but Mankind; he is *the Saviour of the World*, 1 Joh. 4. 14. *a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World*, 1 Joh. 2. 2. He is *the Desire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 7. *God's Salvation to the End of the Earth*, Is. 49. 6. and *the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him*. Heb. 5. 9. whether Jews or Gentiles, Bond or Free, of what Quality or Condition soever, of what People or Kindred, Nation or Language soever, under the whole Heaven. All these Things consider'd, well might St. Paul add this to the rest of the Prerogatives of the Jewish Nation, that of *them, as concerning the Flesh, Christ came*. By Way of Application,

1. This

1: This gives us just occasion of bewailing the sad Condition of that Nation, in respect of their Unbelief, and obstinate Rejection of Christ. That they, unto whom Christ was first promis'd and tender'd, and of whom, as concerning the *Flesh*, He came, should not entertain him; that when he came to his own, his own should not receive him, as the Evangelist speaks, *Joh. 1. 11.* that when the Gentile World should joyfully and thankfully receive him, when the Ends of the Earth should stoop to him, and bow before him, when all Nations should serve him, and fall down to him, the *Jews* only, his own People, of whom it might be said, that he was Bone of their Bone, and Flesh of their Flesh, should not only refuse and disown him, but despitefully Use him, Persecute and Crucify him; that thro' their Blindness and Infidelity, they should wilfully thrust away their own Mercies, and deprive themselves of their Share in that great Salvation, which even Strangers and Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Israel*, should be made Partakers of; that there should be those who should come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and

and from the South, and sit down with *Abraham*, and with *Isaac*, and with *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the Children of the Kingdom, the *Jews* themselves, shall be shut out, as our Saviour foretold, *Luk. 13. 28, 29.* This is a Lamentation, and

2. Therefore calls upon us to remember, in our Prayers, this wilfully blind, unbelieving, hardened, and for the present rejected, miserable, and despised People, tho' heretofore the Lord's Inheritance, *People in whom he delighted, Is. 62. 4.* and *his first-born*, as he calls them, *Jer. 31. 9.* I say, it calls upon us to remember them in our Prayers, and to be earnest with God, that he would be pleased to take away the Veil from their Hearts, and open their Eyes, that they may see the Things that belong to their Peace; and that now, after that for so many Ages, they have obstinately persevered in their wretched Unbelief and Enmity against Christ, they may at length acknowledge him to be the true *Messiah*, promised to their Fore-fathers, the alone common Saviour both of Jews and Gentiles, and the only Mediator between God and Man: That God would be pleased, according to the Promise and Prediction, *Zach. 12. 10.* to pour upon them

them the Spirit of Grace and Supplication, that they may, by the Eye of Faith, look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and be in Bitterness for him, as one that is in Bitterness for his first-born.

3. As concerning our Selves, what abundant Matter of Thankfulness to God have we, that he should be pleased to manifest and reveal Christ to us, whom he hath hid from them, who in respect of their Consanguinity and Alliance to him, might seem to have a special Interest in, and claim to him above the rest of the World; and who therefore should have been most forward to receive him as their Saviour, and have given Example thereof unto others. We poor Gentiles, who as then were *Loammi*, not own'd of God as his People, were not dignify'd with that Honour to have Christ, the Lord of Glory, and the Redeemer of Mankind, descended from us; that was the sole Prerogative of the Jew: but God had reserv'd better Things for us; when the Jews would reject Christ, we should embrace him, and partake of these inestimable Benefits through him, which they should fall short of: when they should Blaspheme Christ, while he should be a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock

Rock of Offence to them, we should look upon him as the Head-stone of the Corner, and acknowledge, that there is no other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we must be Saved. Tho' we cannot claim that Kindred to him which they may, yet through Faith we have a spiritual, that is, a more comfortable Alliance to him. He vouchsafeth to own us as his Brethren, and as Children of the same Father: *I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God*, saith he, *Joh. 20. 17.* And if there be not Comfort enough in the Relation of Brother, he takes in other Relations, *Mark 3. 35. Whosoever shall do the Will of God, the same is my Brother, and my Sister, and Mother.* So that whatsoever Dearness, Sweetness, or Comfort there is to be found in any, or all the most entire Relations among Men, all this there is in our Relation to Christ by Faith. When the Woman in the Gospel, greatly affected with the gracious Words, which Christ had uttered, cry'd out, and said, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked*, *Luk. 11. 27.* Our Saviour reply'd, *Yea rather Blessed are they, that hear the Word of God and keep it.* To have borne Christ, and brought him
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into the World, to have given him Suck, and Nursed him, is not so much, nor such Matter of Comfort, as to have by Faith receiv'd him, as to have Believ'd in him, and Obey'd him. *Mary* was not so happy in being the Mother of her Lord, as she was in being his Disciple and Follower. And if we be Christians in Truth, and not only in Name, we are herein incomparably Happier, than any carnal Relation to Christ could ever have made us. Let's rejoice in our Portion, and say, Our Lot is fallen to us in a fair Ground, we have a goodly Heritage. Let's admire and adore the Goodness and Severity of God, his Severity to the Unbelieving Jew, in casting him off, his Goodness to us, in taking us in. Let's say, in an humble and thankful Acknowledgment of God's rich and free Grace towards us, who maketh us to differ from them? And what have we that we have not receiv'd? That we have not receiv'd from his free Bounty, who could have bestow'd Faith on them, and have left us to Perish in our Unbelief.

And so I have done with the Privilege it self, as to the Substance thereof, that Christ descended from the Jews.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

Rom. ix. Ver. 5.

Whose are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the Flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

I Now proceed to the Amplification thereof, from the Dignity and Excellency of the Person of Christ, in the Words following, *Who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen.* In which Words the Dignity of his Person is set forth by the divine Nature, unto which, in that glorious Person, the human Nature was united. In the Words before, the Apostle clearly imply'd, that Christ, who came from the Jews, according to the Flesh, was not only Flesh, or a meer Man, but something more; in these following Words he plainly affirms,

firms, that he was God as well as Man, and consequently, that in his Person two Natures, the divine Nature and the human, wonderfully meet. So then the Words, besides some other Things considerable in them, are a clear and undeniable Proof of the Deity of Christ. This being the Principal Thing in this Scripture, passing by other Things that might be observ'd from the Words, I shall chiefly insist on it. A Man would think nothing could be more plain, than that the very Scope and Intent of these Words, is to amplify and set forth the Greatness of this Privilege of the Jews, by shewing how glorious a Person Christ is, who as concerning the Flesh came from them, as being not a Man of the common Rank, not a meer Man, but infinitely above Man and all other Creatures, in respect of another Nature which he hath; as being *over all, God blessed for ever*. And yet however, as plain as it is, the Socinians, who deny the Deity of Christ, and make him to be a *ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον*, a meer Man, have had the Face to offer Violence to this plain Scripture, as well as to others, that they might deprive us of the Argument for the Deity of Christ, which it
affords

affords us. They, after *Erasmus*, who first shew'd them the Way, read the former Clause, *of Whom as concerning the Flesh Christ came*, by it self, fixing a Point after those Words; and then they make the Words following to have an entire Sense apart from what went before, as if they had no relation unto Christ at all, rendring them thus, God, who is over all, is blessed for ever, or be blessed for ever. And indeed it cannot be denied, but that the Greek Text would admit of such a Rendring, if the Pointing and other Things did not hinder it. But there are divers Reasons against this their forced Interpretation.

1. Their setting a Point after the first Clause, is a Boldness not to be suffered, as being contrary to all Greek Copies, which with one Consent place only a Comma there. Neither may the Adding or Interposing of a Point be accounted a small Matter; for if Men may be allowed to take that Liberty, to add, or alter Points at their Pleasure, it will be an easy Matter for Hereticks and erroneous Persons to pervert the Sense of the plainest Scriptures.

2. Such a Gratulation, gratulatory Exclamation, or Doxology, call it which

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you will, were in this Place unseasonable, and no Way suitable to the Matter in Hand. For tho' the Apostle had been reckoning up the great Privileges of that People, yet their present Unbelief and Obstinacy made all those Privileges to be of no other Use or Advantage to them, than only to aggravate their Sin, and heighten their Punishment; and this was to the Apostle, Matter of Sorrow of Heart, and continual Heaviness, as he before, in this Chapter, out of which the Text is taken professeth, in so much as he could have even wish'd to be *accursed from Christ himself, if thereby they might be gain'd to Christ, and sav'd.* When upon this sad Occasion only, the Apostle mentions their Privileges, is it probable that he should thereupon presently break forth into such a gratulatory Exclamation, and cry out so abruptly, *God be blessed for ever, Amen?*

3. As I have formerly said, nothing could be more agreeable to the Apostle's Scope and Intention in this Place, being to shew the Greatness of their Privilege in being the Progenitors of Christ, than to speak of the Dignity and Eminency of his Person, in respect of his divine Nature.

4. Add

4. Add to all this, that the *Syriac* Paraphrase on the new Testament, expressly refers this last Clause unto Christ; and moreover all learned Interpreters, both Ancient and Modern, have so understood it. Who are these Men therefore, that they should thus mangle and wrest the Text to their own Sense, and thereby oppose themselves against the concurrent Judgment of all true Christians, and the Church universal?

Then again, whereas they object, that if it be granted, that those Words, *Who is over all, God blessed for ever*, are to be referr'd to Christ, yet it cannot be a sufficient Proof of the Deity of Christ, because Angels and Magistrates are in Scripture call'd Gods, tho' they be but Creatures; I say, whereas they make this Objection, 'tis evident from the Circumstances of this Scripture, that the Word God must here be understood of the true and living God, who made Heaven and Earth, and of none else. For

1. The God here signify'd is said to be *over all*, that is, over all Creatures, as having the supreme Power, and Government of all the World.

The Eighth Sermon.

2. He is *God blessed for ever*, which is the very same Doxology, or Form of giving Glory to God, which in the First Chapt. v. 25. of this Epistle, is apply'd unto the Creator of the World; where the Apostle, speaking of the Idolatry of the Gentiles, saith, *That they changed the Truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.*

3. The solemn Word, *Amen*, in the close, is wont to be added as here, to shut up those our Prayers, Praises, or Doxologies, which are directed unto God. So 'tis added in the Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer; so in that Scripture just now quoted out of *Rom. 1. They worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever Amen.* So *Phil. 4. 20. Now unto God and our Father be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.* And *1 Tim. 1. 17. To the only wise God be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.* So every where in the New Testament: But there is no Instance of the Use of it in the closing up of any such Sentence, wherein any Good is spoken of, or any Honour is given to the Creatures. To be short,
these

these Words are so evidently referr'd to Christ, and in them his Deity is so plainly and expressly affirm'd, that they must study to pervert Scripture, and even rack their Wits, to fasten their own Sense upon it, who will understand it otherwise.

This great Truth, *That Christ is truly God*, I shall somewhat enlarge on, first confirming it from other Scriptures, and then applying it. And least any should think it but Time mis-spent, and Labour lost, to confirm a Truth which we so generally acknowledge, I desire them to consider,

1. 'Tis a very profound and mysterious Truth, and not so easy to be thoroughly Assented to, and firmly Believed, as many may conceive it to be. That two Natures, so infinitely distant from each other, as the divine and human Nature, should meet in one and the same Person, and be so entirely and closely United, is the Admiration of Angels, and not the least considerable of those deep Things of the Gospel, which those glorious Spirits desire to look into. 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. If any Man think it an easy Matter to believe it, it may well be questioned whether he

hath yet attain'd any sound Belief thereof.

2. 'Tis a most weighty and fundamental Truth, the whole Stress of our Salvation resting on it, as will afterwards appear. Some other Things may be mistaken, and we may possibly err in them, without the unavoidable Loss of our Souls; but this is a Truth the Belief whereof is absolutely necessary to Salvation.

3. He whose Faith is strongest, and believes it with the greatest Firmness and Steadiness, may yet be sensible of the Weakness of his Faith in the Hour of Temptation.

4. The more important any Truth is, and the greater the Hazard is of disbelieving it, the more maliciously and violently will Satan assault us, when he sees his Opportunity, to undermine or weaken our Faith therein. These Things consider'd, no Man should think it an impertinent or needless Thing to look into the Scriptures, and take a View of the Proofs of this great Truth. If no other Benefit thence accrue unto him, yet he will recount the Grounds of his Faith, and have by him in a Readiness wherewithal to answer the Tempter, and quench his fiery Darts. 1

I come therefore to show how this Truth may be further confirm'd from other Scriptures. And indeed as God hath been pleased to lay much Weight upon this Truth, (the whole Fabrick of our Religion being built upon it) so there is scarce any Truth that is more fully attested, and strongly confirm'd by Scripture, than this of the Deity of Christ is. I shall in the Proof thereof insist upon those usual, learned and orthodox Heads of Arguments which all Divines have insisted on: and indeed he that in this Matter, or in any other Point almost, should purposely wave them, and endeavour to seek out others of his own, will be sure to say much less to the Purpose than they have done; and besides it may happen that while he pretends to strengthen the Truth, he will rather weaken and betray it.

I. Then the Deity of Christ may be undeniably argued and infer'd from all those Scriptures in which the proper Attributes of God are ascrib'd to Christ. And such are God's Eternity, Immutability; Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience. These are so appropriated to the one great God, *in whom we live, move, and have our Being*, that

if the Holy Scriptures give them unto Christ, we cannot but acknowledge Him to be God. And that they are all given to Christ is manifest, and cannot be denied without much Perverseness, by any Man who is well acquainted with the Scripture.

1. As for Eternity, that this is attributed to Christ may be sufficiently prov'd from all those Passages of Holy Scripture in which he is affirm'd to have been before the World; for so Eternity is in Scripture often describ'd. *Pf. 90. 2. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World, even from Everlasting to Everlasting thou art God. Eph. 1. 4. God hath chosen us before the Foundation of the World. And again 1 Pet. 1. 20. Christ is said to have been fore-ordain'd before the Foundation of the World, that is, from Eternity. Now that Christ was before the World, divers Scriptures either clearly affirm, or necessarily imply. He is before all Things, Coloss. 1. 17. All the Creatures were made by him, Joh. 1. 3. and so in divers other Places of Scripture, which I shall afterwards mention under another Head. If all other Things were made by him, then he must needs be*

be supposed to have been before them all. He was possess'd of the same Glory and Blessedness with his Father, when as yet no Creature was in Being. *Father* (saith he) *glorify me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.* *Joh. 17. 5.* To this Purpose 'tis that he is called the *First-born of every Creature, Coloss. 1. 15.* for according to the best Interpreters, he is so called, as in regard of his Excellency and Preeminency above all the Creatures, so also in regard he was before them all. But besides these Scriptures that prove Christ to have been before the World, there are others from whence his Eternity may be undeniably demonstrated. *Mich. 5. 2.* *Thou Bethlehem Ephrata, tho' thou be little among the Thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from Everlasting.* This Scripture is to be understood of the Messiah, or the Christ, as the Jews themselves understood it, *Matth. 2. 4, 5, 6.* And whereas his goings forth are said to have been from of Old, from Everlasting, what else can be thereby intended, but his proceeding from the
Father

Father by eternal Generation? Agreeable hereunto it is, that the Son of God is affirm'd to have *neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life, Heb. 7. 3.* for in that respect *Melchizedech* is there said to have resembled him. *Jesus Christ is the first and the last, Rev. 1. 18. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, Rev. 22. 13.* And even so doth God express his Eternity. *Is. 44. 6. I am the first and the last, and besides me there is no God.* To these Scriptures may be added *Prov. 8. 22, 23.* Where *Wisdom*, (which all orthodox Antiquity ever understood of the personal Wisdom of the Father, the eternal Son of God) I say this *Wisdom* saith, *The Lord possess'd me in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of Old; I was set up from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was. And then presently after, before the Mountains were settled, before the Hills were, I was brought forth, v. 25.* So much touching Christ's Eternity.

2. Immutability or Unchangeableness is another Attribute of God: *I am the Lord, I change not*, saith he, *Mat. 3. 6. With him is no Variableness, neither Shadow of Turning. Jam. 1. 17.* As for all the Creatures, they are subject to
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Changes and Alterations, as appears in the most perfect, the most excellent of all the Creatures, the very Angels, many of which left their first Estate, and fell from their Happiness. Now this Attribute is also given to Christ. *He is the same Yesterday, and to Day, and for ever. Heb. 13. 8. The Heavens shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as doth a Garment, and as a Vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be chang'd; but thou art the same, and thy Years shall not fail. Heb. 1. 11, 12.* Which Words are there spoken to the Son of God, as by the Context is manifest.

3. Omnipotence or Almightyness, another proper Attribute of God is given to Christ. *Joh. 10. 28, 29, 30.* Christ speaking of his Sheep, saith, *they shall never perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of my Hand: my Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no Man is able to pluck them out of my Fathers Hand; I and my Father are one.* Here 'tis plain that Christ assumes to himself an uncontrollable and irresistible Power; *none can pluck his Sheep out of his Hands; and that he hath such an almighty Power, he proves, because he and his Father are one, and therefore the*
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same almighty Power which his Father hath, is his also. This Almightyness the Apostle also ascribes to Christ, *Phil. 3. 20, 21. Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto himself.* A great Work it is to make these our mortal, frail, and corruptible Bodies, to become immortal, and incorruptible; but Christ is endued with a Power sufficient for this great Work; he hath a supereminent and almighty Power, which no Creature can oppose or resist; he is able to subdue all Things to himself, and to make of them, and do with them what he pleaseth. The Schools speak of an obediential Power in the Creature, in reference to the Creator. Every Creature is subject to be wrought upon, to be fram'd and fashion'd, to be moulded and transformed, to be changed and altered as he sees good, even as the Clay is pliable, yielding and obedient as it were under the Hand of the Potter. This is that Power which is here ascribed unto Christ; a transcendent

dent Power which no Creature is capable of.

4. Omnipresence, or a being every where present, another of God's Attributes, is also given to Christ. *Matth. 28. 20.* Christ giving his Commission to his Disciples for Preaching the Gospel, makes them a Promise of his Presence, saying, *Go teach, Lo I am with you always, even to the End of the World.* This Promise must be understood of his Presence with them, and all their Successors, the Publishers of the Gospel in all succeeding Ages; for his Apostles and Disciples themselves were not to live here in the Exercise of their Function to the End of the World. So then in all Ages of the Church to the End of the World, and in all Places where any of his Servants shall at any Time be employed in Publishing the Gospel, then and there hath he promised his Presence with them: which Promise how could he make good unless he were every where present, which no Creature can be? How many Congregations are there at this very Hour where the Servants of Christ are now employed in that Work, wherein Christ hath promised his Presence with them! In all which Congregations met
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at the same Time in all Parts of the Christian World, he must be at once present, or else the Truth of his Promise would fail. And the like Promise there is for his Presence with Christians meeting together in his Name, how few soever, or in what Place soever : *Where Two or Three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the Midst of them. Matth. 18. 20.*

5. Omniscience is another Attribute of God which is given to Christ. *Lord thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I love thee,* said Peter unto Christ, *John 21. 17.* If Peter had been mistaken, and ascrib'd more to Christ than did belong to him, and thereby detracted from the Honour of God, whose sole Prerogative it is to know all Things, our Saviour who was most zealous of his Father's Glory, would have refus'd that Honour which was not due to himself, and have reprov'd Peter for giving it to him. The Knowledge of Men's Thoughts, and the Searching of their Hearts, is that which properly appertains to God. *Thou only knowest the Hearts of all the Children of Men,* saith Solomon to God in his Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, *1 Kings 8. 39.* And this God takes to himself

himself as his royal Prerogative, *Jer.* 17, 9, 10. *The Heart of Man is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins.* This Knowledge of Man's Heart is ascrib'd to Christ. *John* 2. 24, 25. *Jesus did not commit himself unto them* (that is, to the Jews) *because he knew all Men, and needed not that any should testify of Man, for he knew what was in Man.* *Matth.* 9. 3, 4. *Certain of the Scribes said within themselves, this Man blasphemeth:* they said so only within themselves, they did not discover it, it was only the secret Language of their Hearts: and *Jesus knowing their Thoughts said, wherefore think ye evil in your Hearts?* So again *Matth.* 12. 25. he is said to have known the Thoughts of the Pharisees. And 'tis Jesus Christ the Son of God who saith of himself, *I am he which searches the Reins and Hearts,* *Rev.* 2. 18. 23.

And thus we have seen, that the Attributes of God, his Eternity, Immutability, Omnipotency, Omnipresence and Omniscience, are given unto Christ, which undeniably demonstrates him to be God.

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2. The Deity of Christ is prov'd, because the Worship due only to God is given unto Christ. I shall briefly instance in several Particulars.

1. As for inward Worship, our Belief, our Hope, our Trust, which are Parts of that inward and Heart-worship, as I may so call it, which is due to God, all these are given to Christ.

1. For Belief or Faith; *God so lov'd the World that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. John 3. 16. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16. 31. Ye believe in God, believe also in me, said Christ to his Disciples, John 14. 1.*

2. Hope, as, *1 Cor. 15. 19. If in this Life only we have Hope in Christ, then are we of all Men most miserable. 1 Thess. 1. 2, 3. We give thanks to God always for you all, remembring, without ceasing, your Work of Faith, and Labour of Love, and Patience of Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

3. Trust, *Pf. 2. 12. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the Way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their Trust in him. Rom. 15. 12. In him shall the Gentiles Trust. Eph. 1. 11, 12, 13. We are pre-*

destinated according to the Purpose of him, who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will, that we should be to the Praise of his Glory, &c. who first trusted in Christ, in whom also ye trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your Salvation.

2. As touching that outward Worship, which is proper to God, this also is given to Christ.

1. Adoration, Christ is to be ador'd even by the highest and most excellent of all the Creatures. *When God bringeth his first-begotten into the World, he saith, let all the Angels of God worship him, Heb.*

1. 6. Of this Worship given to Christ we often read in the Gospel. So the Leper worshipped him, *Matth.* 8. 2. and the Ruler, *Matth.* 9. 18. and the Disciples, *Luke* 24. 52. Neither did Christ ever manifest any dislike of them for so doing. When Saint *John* fell down to worship before the Feet of the Angel, *Rev.* 22. 8, 9. the Angel saith unto him, *See thou do it not, for I am thy Fellow-servant, worship God.* And so undoubtedly, if Christ had not been God, he would have made the like Reply upon all such Occasions, and not have suffered himself to be worshipped. He would have mind-

ed them of what he alledg'd to Satan in the like Case, *Matth. 4. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

2. Invocation or Prayer. A Man indeed may pray in his Heart, as *Hannah* did, but I speak of that Prayer now, that is externally uttered and expressed by Words. Thus the Father of the Child prays unto Christ, *Mark 9. 24. Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief*; and so the Apostles, *Luke 17. 5. Lord increase our Faith*; which Prayer they there direct unto the Lord Christ, as by the Context is manifest. Unto Christ *Stephen* directed his Prayers, *Acts 7. 59. They stoned Stephen, calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* What we read calling upon God and saying, is only in the Original *Ἰπικαλέμενον καὶ λέγοντα*, that is invoking, calling upon, or praying, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit; so that 'tis evident he directs his Prayer to Christ, and that about his highest Concernment. For what hath a dying Man of greater Concernment, than the everlasting Estate of his Soul? And who now dying, would commend that into the Hands of any but God? And lastly, who

who hath the disposing of the Spirits of Men when they die, but God? *The Spirit then returns to God that gave it. Eccl. 12. 7.* In all which respects we may be well assur'd, that dying *Stephen* would never have commended his Spirit into the Hands of Christ, had he not believ'd him to be God. Thus Saint *Paul* in his Epistle, still begs of Christ all spiritual Mercies, necessary for the Churches to whom he wrote. So writing to the *Romans* he prays, *Grace be to you, and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* So again in *1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 3.* and other Epistles. In which Places he joins God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ together, and directs his Prayer to both Persons alike, only first naming the Father, as being in order the first Person in the Trinity. And as in the Beginning, so in the Close of his Epistles, he begs Grace of Christ, in that his usual Form, *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.* Nay so constant was the Practice of Believers, to call upon the Name of Christ in Prayer, that 'tis made the very Description of Christians, and a Character by which they are distinguish'd from Infidels. So *Ananias* saith

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unto Christ concerning *Saul*, Acts 9. 14. *that he had Authority from the chief Priest, to bind all that did call upon his Name.* So that to call upon the Name of Christ, and to be a Christian, is the same Thing. So St. Paul directing his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, and not only to them at *Corinth*, but to all other Christians, expresseth himself in this Manner, *Paul an Apostle, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all that in every Place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 1. 2.*

3. Offering up to God our Praises, and giving Glory to him with our Tongues, is another Part of God's outward Worship, which tho' it be sometimes comprehended under Prayer taken largely, yet here I distinguish it from Prayer, as 'tis taken more strictly for Petition; for in that stricter Sense I have been just now speaking of Prayer. This Part of God's external Worship is also given to Christ, and that in as high Terms, and ample Forms, as 'tis any where ascrib'd to God the Father. I shall here only mention those several Forms of giving Glory to God, which we have in the Book of the *Revelations*. *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests*

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Priests unto God and his Father, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever, Amen. Rev. 1. 5, 6. I beheld, and heard the Voice of many Angels round about the Throne, and the Beasts, and the Elders, and the Number of them was Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand, and Thousands of Thousands, saying with a loud Voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Strength, and Wisdom, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing: and every Creature which is in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, Honour, Glory, and Power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Rev. 5. 11, 12, 13. I beheld, and lo, a great Multitude which no Man could number, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands; and cried with a loud Voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb. Rev. 7. 9, 10. I saw them who had gotten the Victory over the Beast, having the Harps of God; and they sing the Song of Moses the Servant of God, and the Song of

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Lamb, saying, Great and Marvellous are thy Works Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints.
Rev. 15. 2, 3. This Song is called the Song of *Moses*, in regard of its Resemblance of his Song, *Exod. 15. 1, 2. &c.* both in respect of the Matter and Occasion thereof: A Song containing and setting forth the high Praises of God, as that of *Moses* did, and a Song after the Deliverance of God's People from under the Tyranny of Antichrist, as *Moses's* Song was, after the Deliverance of God's People from under the Iron Yoke, their cruel Bondage in *Egypt*. In both these respects 'tis called the Song of *Moses*: but 'tis called the Song of the Lamb in a different Sense; not as if sung by the Lamb, as that other was sung by *Moses*, but because sung to the Honour of the Lamb, and because the Praises of the Lamb were the Subject thereof: So then this being the Song of the Lamb, a Song indited and sung to the Honour of the Lamb, to Christ we must understand the victorious People of God speaking, and to Christ directing their Praises and saying, *Great and Marvellous are thy Works Lord God Almighty, Just and True are thy Ways thou King of Saints.*

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Saints. Thus we have seen all the Host of Heaven, and all the Saints, yea all the Creatures of Earth giving Glory to the Lamb, and that in such high Forms of Praises, as no Man, in his right Mind, can possibly conceive to be agreeable or applicable to any, but to him only who is truly and essentially God. To shut up this Head, he is essentially one with his Father; *John* 10. 30. *1 John* 5. 7. Equal with him, *Phil.* 2. 6. And 'tis his Father's Pleasure and Command that equal Honour should be given him. *The Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all Men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. John* 5. 22, 23.

3. The Deity of Christ may be prov'd from his Works, which are such as could not be done by any Creature. And these are

1. Creation. To create, or to make Things out of nothing, is above the Power of any Creature. The Creature requires some preexistent Matter to work upon; without this it can do nothing. It requires no less than an almighty Power, to bring the least Thing out of nothing.

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This great Work is ascrib'd to Christ. *All Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made that was made, John 1. 3. He was in the World, and the World was made by him. v. 10. God hath in these last Days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all Things, by whom also he made the World. Heb. 1. 2. By him were all Things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, Visible and Invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers; all Things were created by him, and for him. Coloss. 1. 16. Where by the Way we may note another Argument, to prove the Deity of Christ, besides that drawn from the Creation of all Things by him: the Apostle saith, as all Things were created by him, so they were created for him; he is not only the original and efficient Cause, but also the End of all Things, which can be said of no Creature, but of God only, who made all Things for himself, Prov. 16. 4. Who hath created all Things, and for whose Pleasure they are and were created. Rev. 4. 11. Of whom, through whom, and to whom are all Things, Rom. 11. 36.*

2. The

2. The Preservation of the Things made, is a Work belonging only to God, and this also is ascribed to Christ. *By him all Things consist, Coloss. 1. 17. and he upholdeth all Things by the Word of his Power, Heb. 1. 3.*

3. The raising of the Dead is a Work proper to God ; and this Christ takes to himself. Speaking of Raising himself, he therein expresseth himself in such a Manner, as we must needs understand he would do it by his own Power. *I have Power to lay down my Life; and I have Power to take it again, John 10. 18. Destroy this Temple, and in three Days, I will raise it,* meaning the Temple of his Body, *John 2. 19.* And so also of Raising others, *This is the Will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life, and I will raise him up at the last Day. John 6. 40.* And this he doth by a Power equal to his Father's. *As the Father raiseth up the Dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. John 5. 21.*

4. The Bestowing of Grace, and Giving spiritual Strength, is the Work of God alone. *It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.*

sure. Phil. 2. 13. And this is attributed to Christ. We have seen before, that the Father of the Child, *Mark 9.* and the Apostle *Luk. 17.* beg'd of Christ increase of Faith; and the Apostle, Grace and Peace frequently, in his Epistles. Moreover Christ saith, *without me ye can do nothing. Job. 15. 5.* And St. Paul acknowledgeth all his Strength to be from Christ. *I can do all Things through Christ, who strengtheneth me. Phil. 4. 13.* And thus much concerning that third Argument drawn from the Works ascribed to Christ.

4. The Name of God is frequently in Scripture given to Christ; and this in such Sort, and with such other Epithets and Circumstances, as necessarily give us to understand, that none other but the most high God, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth, can be meant. *Is. 9. 6. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder; and his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.* That this Prophecy is to be understood of Christ, cannot be doubted; *Matth. 1. 22, 23.* After that mention had been made of the Conception and Birth of Christ, the Evangelist there adds,

adds, *Now all this was done that it might be fulfill'd which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold a Virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.* That is, God in our Nature, God manifested in the Flesh. *John 20. 28. Thomas* said unto him, (to Jesus) *my Lord, and my God.* Neither (as the Socinians perversly interpret it) may we so understand *Thomas*, as if he had only taken God's Name into his Mouth by Way of Admiration, as many profane People vainly and irreverently do, when they see or hear any strange Thing; but he in those Words professeth his Faith in Christ, and acknowledgeth him to be his Lord, and his God, the same Person that had been crucified, but was now risen from the Dead. And this is very evident from the Circumstances of the Text. *Thomas* being not present when Christ, after his Resurrection, appear'd to the rest of the Disciples, could not believe their report concerning him, that they had seen the Lord, and that he was indeed risen. Nay he was peremptory and obstinate in his Unbelief, saying, *Except I shall*
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see in his Hands the Print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Print of the Nails, and thrust my Hand into his Side, I will not believe. Our Saviour afterwards appearing again to his Disciples, when *Thomas* was among them, condescends to his Weakness, and saith unto him, *Reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands; and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side, and be not faithless, but believing.* Which Words of Christ were doubtless not only Words of Command, but Words of Power also; while he bids him believe, he also therewithal enables him to believe. Whereupon *Thomas* presently replies, *my Lord, and my God*: The Text saith expressly, *Thomas* answered, and said unto him, *my Lord, and my God.* So then nothing is more evident, than that by those Words he professeth his Faith in Christ risen from the Dead. And, whereas he did it in those Terms, *my Lord, and my God*, Our Saviour is so far from disliking it, that he plainly and expressly approves of it, and only blames him that he was so backward, and had not done it sooner. *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believ'd, blessed are they that have not seen, and yet*

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yet have believed. John 1. 1. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same Word by whom all Things were made, v. 3. and which was made Flesh, v. 14.* The same of whom 'tis there added, *that he dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.*

Acts 20. 28. Where Paul speaking to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus saith, *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own Blood.* The Blood of Christ is here called the Blood of God, as being the Blood of that Person who is God. *Col. 2. 9.* *In him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily: σωματικῶς*, truly, really, or as Melancthon, personally, *σῶμα* being sometimes taken for a Person. *Phil. 2. 6.* He being in the Form of God, *thought it no Robbery to be equal with God.* Where by *μορφῇ θεῶ*, the Form of God, we are not to understand the Likeness or Resemblance of God only in respect of some Qualities, tho' in a different Nature, but the very Nature and Essence of God. For

1. In

1. In that very Sense he is presently said to have taken upon him the Form of a Servant, and to have been made in the Likeness of Man ; for he took upon him the true human Nature, and not meerly the Likeness of it, without the Nature it self.

2. 'Tis said, *he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God*, he did not thereby rob God of his Honour, nor assume to himself what did not of right belong to him. Now this his Equality with God could not be ascrib'd to him, unless he had been so truly in the Form of God, as to be very God ; for nothing but God, no Person inferior to God, can be equal with him.

3. When he became Man *he took upon him the Form of a Servant* ; whence it follows, that he who took upon him the Form of a Servant, was above the Condition of a Servant, and consequently of a Creature ; for all Creatures are Servants to the Creator. Wherefore hence also 'tis evident, those Words, *in the Form of God*, must be understood of his being very God, really and essentially God. 1 Tim. 3. 16. *God was manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed*

believed on in the World, received up into Glory. So then Christ is God manifested in the Flesh. Tit. 2. 13, 14. Christ is called the great God; looking for the blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us. He speaks of the coming of Christ to Judgment, which he calls the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Heb. 1. 8. A most clear and pregnant Place. To the Son, he saith, *thy Throne O God is for ever and ever; a Scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter of thy Kingdom.* From what goes before 'tis apparent and undeniable, that God the Father here speaks to his Son, and gives him the Title, and Stile of God, *Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever.* And thus he speaks to him, as thereby setting him above all the Angels, the highest Rank of Creatures, unto whom he never speaks in that Language; he speaks of them as of Servants and ministring Spirits: So in the Verse immediately foregoing, Of the Angels he saith, *who maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a flaming Fire.* But unto the Son he saith, *thy Throne O God is for ever and ever.* So again in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Verses,

Verſes, he gives him the Preeminence above the Angels. *To which of the Angels ſaid he at any Time, ſit thou on my right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footſtool? Are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for thoſe who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation?* Hence we may infallibly conclude, that the Father gives to his Son the Name of God, in a proper Senſe, and that he doth not only honour him with the Name and Title of God figuratively, as the Enemies of the Deity of Chriſt would have it. For if he hereby intend to diſtinguiſh him from Angels, and ſet him above them all; and if he hereby intends to ſet him above the Condition of the higheſt Rank of Servants, or miniſtring Spirits, as the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe proves him to do; then he is above all Creatures, and therefore is he truly God, and not ſo in Name and Title only, but in Nature: For there is no middle Rank of Beings, between God and the Creature. 1 Joh. 5. 20. *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Underſtanding, that we may know him that is true: And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God and eternal Life. That is, the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt*

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Christ immediately before spoken of, is the true God, and eternal Life. And unto him as Mediator, *all Power is given in Heaven and Earth, Matth. 28. 18.* the Father hath set him as his *King upon the holy Hill of Sion, Ps. 2. 6.* that is, over his Church: he hath exalted him *to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31.* He hath put all Things under his Feet, and given him *to be the Head over all Things to the Church, Eph. 1. 22.*

And hereunto may be added, that Christ is set forth in the New Testament, by several other Names and Titles, which agree only to God, at least with such Epithets, Adjuncts, and Circumstances as go along with them. He is called the *Lord of Glory, 1 Cor. 2. 8.* That one Lord who gave Being to all Things, *To us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things, and we by him, 1 Cor. 8. 6.* The *Lord of the Sabbath,* that is, he to whom that Day is consecrated, by whose Command 'tis set apart, and to whom it appertains to determine what shall be done, or not to be done on that Day, *Mark 2. 28.* *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Rev. 19. 16.*

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And

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And whereas in the Old Testament the Name *Jehovah* is appropriated unto God, and incommunicable to any Creature, this Name also, is often given to Christ: So in that Prophecy concerning the Messiah, *Jer. 23. 5, 6. Behold the Days come (saith the Lord) that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute Judgment and Justice in the Earth: in his Days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his Name, whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness, or Jehovah our Righteousness, as the Hebrew hath it. Unto which Prophecy concerning Christ, St. Paul seems to have had respect, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Where he saith, that Christ is made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness.*

Again, *Is. 40. 3. Christ is called Jehovah. The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderness, prepare ye the Way of the Lord, (the Way of Jehovah, in the Original) make strait in the Desert a high Way for our God. This Scripture all the four Evangelists unanimously interpret of John the Baptist, as we may see, Matth. 3. 3. Mark 1. 3. Luke 3. 4. John 1. 23. He being the immediate Fore-runner of the Messiah, by his Preaching*

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Preaching foretold that the Kingdom of God was at Hand, Christ should presently come : he, calling Men to Repentance, and making them sensible of their Sins, fitted them to receive Christ; and thus he prepared the Way of Jehovah, the Way of the Lord Christ, that he might be the more welcome, and find the readier Entertainment in the Hearts of Men.

To mention only one Place more ,
Zach. 12. 10. We have a Promise of Mercy to be shewed unto the Jews, who should crucify Christ; they should be made sensible of their horrid Sin, and be brought to Repentance for it. The Promise runs thus ; *I will pour upon the House of David, and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and Supplication, and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and be in Bitterness for him, as he that is in Bitterness for his First-born.* That this Scripture hath relation to Christ, whom the Jews crucified and pierced, is manifest both from *John 19. 37.* where 'tis so interpreted and applyed, and from *Rev. 1. 7.* And 'tis also as clear, that he who here speaks, and saith, they
X 2 shall

shall look upon me whom they have pierced, is Jehovah ; for if we consult the Original, we shall find that 'tis Jehovah that speaks throughout the Chapter. So v. 1. v. 4. v. 7. and v. 8. Jehovah still speaks, for that which in all those Verses, we read the Lord, is in the Hebrew Text, Jehovah. And the same Jehovah it is, who still goes on to speak to the End of the Chapter : Whence it necessarily follows, that those Words, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, must be understood as spoken by Jehovah, and none else. Wherefore Christ, whom the Jews pierced, is Jehovah, that is, truly and essentially God. Besides these, there are divers other Places in the Old Testament, where the Name of Jehovah is attributed to Christ, some of which Places I shall have Occasion of mentioning under the next Head, which hereafter I shall speak of.

SERMON IX.

Rom. ix. Ver. 5.

*Whose are the Fathers, and
of whom as concerning the
Flesh Christ came, who is
over all, God blessed for ever.
Amen.*

V. **T**HE Deity of Christ may be further confirmed by comparing fundry Places of the Old Testament with Places in the New, whereby it will manifestly appear, that what is unquestionably spoken of the true God, the God of *Israel*, in the Old Testament, is in the New Testament applied unto, and affirmed of Christ; which could not be, but that Christ is truly God, the very same in Nature and Essence with the God of *Israel*. This hath in Part appeared from some of those Places have

I have now already mentioned. I shall instance in some of those many other Places, that might be alledged to this Purpose.

We read *Numb. 14. 22. Ps. 95. 8, 9.* and in divers other Places of the Old Testament, that the Israelites tempted God, that great God, the only true and living God, that had brought them out of *Egypt* with an high Hand, and a stretched out Arm; and yet the Apostle saith, *1 Cor. 10. 9.* that *they tempted Christ*; for that's the Sense of those Words, *Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted*; that is, as some of them also tempted Christ: Wherefore Christ their God is the same in Nature and Essence with the God of *Israel*, whom that People of Old tempted in the Wilderness.

Besides, if the Apostle dissuade from tempting Christ, for Fear of Incurring the same Judgments which befell the Israelites for tempting God, evident it is that to tempt Christ, is to tempt God, seeing 'tis no less dangerous to tempt the One, than the Other.

Neither may it seem strange that the Apostle should there so speak of Christ, if we were under the Old Testament,
for

for so also in several other Places of the New Testament, doth the Holy Ghost speak. *Heb. 11. 26.* 'tis said of *Moses*, that *he esteemed the Reproach of Christ, greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt.* And *1 Pet. 3. 18, 19, 20.* we read that Christ preached to the old World before *Noah's Flood*; to the Spirits that are now in Prison, in Hell; but were then disobedient while *Noah* was Building the Ark, and could by no Warnings be brought to Repentance. But how did Christ preach to them? Surely by the Ministry of *Noah*, whom he imploy'd, and by his Spirit enabled to that Service. So then Christ as God, by his Servants taught his Church, and called Sinners to Repentance, as well under the Old Testament, as now in the Times of the New.

Again *Is. 6. 1, 2, 3.* we have the Description of a Vision represented to the Prophet. *I saw the Lord sitting upon his Throne, high and lifted up, and his Train filled the Temple. Above it stood the Seraphims; each one had six Wings; with Twain he covered his Face, and with Twain he covered his Feet, and with Twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of*

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Hosts,

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Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory. In this Vision there is a Representation of God in his Holiness and Glory, of *Jehovah Tzebaoth*, the Lord of Hosts, as he is stiled v. 3. A little after in the 9th and 10th Verses, the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, before represented, gives the Prophet his Commission, saying, *Go, tell this People, hear ye indeed; but understand not, and see indeed, but perceive not. Make the Heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes; lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and convert, and be healed.* Now *John* 12. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41. the Evangelist saith, that tho' Christ had done many Miracles before them (before the Jews) yet they believed not on him, because that *Esaïas* had said, *he hath blinded their Eyes, and hardened their Hearts, &c.* and then he concludes, *these Things said Esaïas, when he saw his Glory.* Whose Glory? The Glory of Christ in *St. John*, for of Christ he there speaks; but the Glory of the Lord of Hosts in *Esaïas*: Whence 'tis apparent that Christ is the same *Jehovah the Lord of Hosts*, whose Glory was represented to the Prophet *Esaïas* in that Vision.

Again,

Again, *Pf. 102. 24, 25, 26, 27.* David thus speaks unto God : *O my God, of old hast thou laid the Foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands: they shall perish, but thou shalt endure ; yea all of them shall wax old like a Garment ; as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed ; but thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no End.* This, all this here spoken of God and to God, the Apostle, *Heb. 1. 10, 11, 12.* expressly attributes to Christ, who therefore must be the same God, to whom David directed his Speech:

Another Place which I shall instance in shall be, *Mal. 3. 1.* Behold I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the Way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple: even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in ; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. This Scripture, as that *Is. 40.* before mentioned, the Evangelist understands of Christ, and John the Baptist : *Mark 1. 2, 3.* where the very Words of the Prophet *Esaias*, and these here of the Prophet *Malachy*, are alledged. Now who is it that here speaketh, saying, Behold, I send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the Way before me.

me. Is is not expressly said to be *Jehovah*, the Lord of Hosts, in the Close of the Verse? *John* the Baptist therefore prepared the Way before him, who is the Lord of Hosts, when he prepared the Way before Christ.

Besides, 'tis here said, that he before whom the Baptist should prepare the Way, should come suddenly to his Temple. If the Temple were Christ's Temple, then is Christ the same with the God of *Israel*; for his was the Temple; to him, and to his Honour was it built and consecrated.

Furthermore, even this is enough to prove Christ to be God, that he came to the Temple as his own, for Temples belong only to God. The very Heathens erected Temples to none but such as they supposed to be Gods, tho' falsely.

Another Place may be, *Zach. 11. 12, 13. They weighed for my Price Thirty Pieces of Silver.* And the Lord said unto me, *Cast it unto the Potter, a goodly Price that I was prized at of them.* The Lord *Jehovah* said, *a goodly Price that I was prized at of them.* This Scripture the Evangelist *St. Matthew* saith, was fulfilled, when the Thirty Pieces of Silver, for which *Judas* betray'd his Master, were

were employ'd for purchasing the Pot-
ters Field to bury Strangers in, *Matth.*
27. 9, 10. Wherefore Christ and Jeho-
vah are one and the same: Christ was
so prized in the Evangelist, *Jehovah* in
the Prophet.

Is. 54. 5. God saith to his People,
Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of
Hosts is his Name; Jehovah Tzebaoth.
And *Jer.* 2. 14. God saith he is married
to his People. And *Hos.* 2. 19. He
saith, *he will betroth them to him for ever.*
But in the New Testament, the Relation
of Husband to the Church is attributed
to Christ. He is called the Bridegroom,
Matth. 9. 15. *John* 3. 29. and the
Church is called his *Wife, the Lamb's Wife*
hath made her self ready, Rev. 19. 7. and
the Bride, that longs for the coming of
Christ her Husband, *Rev.* 22. 17. Hence
the Apostle, speaking of the Relation
between the Man and his Wife, con-
cludes, *This is a great Mystery, but I speak*
of Christ and the Church. Eph. 4. 32.
Giving us thereby to understand, that
in the Relation between the Man and
his Wife, we have a mysterious Repre-
sentation or Resemblance of the Rela-
tion, that there is between Christ and
the Church.

I/. 43.

Is. 43. 3. 11. God declares that he is the alone Saviour of his Church and People. *I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Saviour, v. 3. I, even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour, v. 11.* So again *Is. 45. 21.* *There is no God else beside me, a just God, and a Saviour, there is none beside me.* And *Hos. 13. 4.* *Thou shalt know no God but me, for there is no Saviour beside me.* Now in the New Testament, Christ hath every where the Title of our Saviour. At his Birth he was from Heaven by the Angel so proclaim'd, *Luke 2. 10. 11.* *Behold, saith the Angel, I bring you Tydings of great Joy, which shall be to all People. For unto you is born this Day, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. He is the Saviour of the World,* *John 4. 42.* *the Saviour of his Body, the Church,* *Eph 5. 23.* *And the only Saviour; for there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved, neither is there Salvation in any other,* *Acts 4. 12.* Thus we have seen in all these Instances, unto which more might be added, that what is in the Old Testament attributed, yea appropriated to the God of Israel, the true God, is in the New Testament ascribed unto Christ,

Christ, who therefore must be truly God, the same in Nature and Essence with the God of *Israel*.

So I have done with the Fifth Argument, by which the Deity or Godhead of Christ is prov'd.

Sixthly and Lastly, the same great Truth may be confirm'd from the Offices of Christ, as Mediator between God and Man; his prophetical, priestly, and kingly Office; all which Offices are such, as that the proper Acts and Functions of them, cannot be perform'd by any, but by one who is truly God.

1. In the General, that the Mediator between God and Man, the Saviour of the World should be God, those Places of the Old Testament prove, in which 'tis affirmed, that the Redeemer of the Church of God, which was to come, should be the God of *Israel*. This is expressly affirmed, *Is. 35. 4. Say to them that are of a fearful Heart, be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with Vengeance, even God with a Recompence, he will come and save you.* And that this gracious Promise hath Relation to the coming of Christ, and the Times of the Gospel, is manifest from the Words ensuing: for immediately it follows, *Then*
the

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the Eyes of the Blind shall be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb shall sing. All which Things we know were fulfilled by Christ corporally and spiritually, as well in the Cures he wrought upon the Bodies of Men, as upon the Souls. Again, Is. 40. 9, 10. O Zion, thou that bringest good Tydings, get thee up into the high Mountain: O Jerusalem that bringest good Tydings, lift up thy Voice with Strength, lift up, be not afraid, say unto the Cities of Judah, behold your God. Behold the Lord God will come with strong Hand, and his Arm shall rule for him; his Reward is with him, and his Work before him. That this Promise is likewise to be understood of the coming of Christ to redeem and save his People, may be gathered as well from what goes before, as from what follows. Before, at the Third and Fourth Verses, we have a Prophecy of John Baptist crying in the Wilderness, and preparing the Way of the Lord, the Lord Christ: and then in the first Verse there is a Promise, that the Glory of the Lord should be revealed, and all Flesh should see it together; which is the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ,

Christ, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 4. 6. of which Glory St. John also speaks, Joh. 1. 14. *The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.* Whereupon in the Ninth Verse before mention'd, *Zion and Jerusalem* that bring good Tydings of the coming of the promised and expected Messiah and Saviour, are called upon to publish these glad Tydings, lifting up their Voice, and saying to the Cities of *Judah*, behold your God.

Then 'tis also apparent from what follows that Christ is intended. For after the Renewing of the Promise of his coming, in those Words, v. 9. *Behold, the Lord God will come, his Reward is with him, and his Work before him;* we have in the next Verse such a Description of him, as clearly points out Christ unto us: *he shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd; he shall gather the Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his Bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with Young:* which is exactly answerable to the Character that we have of the Tenderness, Gentleness, and Meekness of Christ, Is. 42. 2, 3. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Streets; a bruised*

a bruised Reed shall he not break, and the smoking Flax shall he not quench. And yet again, that the Lord should be the Saviour of his People, the Lord himself and none else, is evident from several Passages in the Forty-Fifth Chapter of Is. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour: but Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting Salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded World without End. v. 15, 17. There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour, and there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth; for I am God and there is none else. v. 21, 22. So again Hos. 1. 7. I will have Mercy upon the House of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah, by the Lord their God. And Hos. 13. 4. I am the Lord thy God, and thou shalt know no God but me; for there is no Saviour beside me. Thus we have seen in the general, that the Saviour, Redeemer or Mediator, which should come, was to be God, and that Salvation was not to be expected from any one else.

Now I come in the Second Place to shew, that it was necessary, the Redeemer or Mediator between God and Man should

should be God, in respect of all those Offices which he was to undergo. They are all such, as it was not for a Man, or any meer Creature to undertake.

I. His Prophetical Office, as it was to be by him discharged, could be undergone by none but him who is truly God. For we must not look upon Christ as a Prophet of the common Rank, or of an ordinary Character; but as a super-eminent and transcendent Teacher of the Church, who is above all Prophets, Apostles, and Teachers, and from whom they all receive what they are to impart unto, and teach others. A Teacher of those who are under him to teach others, as well as of those who are to learn; *καθηγητὴς αὐτόπιστος*, an infallible Teacher, who is to be believed for himself, and all whose Doctrine is to be assented to, without Gain-saying or Contradiction, to be embrac'd without Doubting or Hesitation, even upon this Account, and for this Reason alone, because it comes from him, and he is the Author of it. Such a Teacher Christ owns himself to be, and professeth he is, *Matth. 23. 8.* where speaking to the Apostles he saith, *One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren.* The

Precedency and Super-eminency of Christ, as the great Prophet, and authentick Teacher of the Church, St. *John* acknowledg'd, and ascrib'd unto him, when comparing him with *John* the Baptist he saith, *There was a Man sent from God whose Name was John: the same came for a Witness, to bear Witness of the Light, that all Men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear Witness of that Light: that was the true Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. John 1. 6, 7, 8, 9.* In which Words we may observe,

1. That Christ is the true Light, that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World: he is the Fountain and Original of Light, from whom is derived all that Light, all that sound Knowledge and Truth which is found among Men. Now this is that which cannot be affirm'd of any but God.

2. We may observe, that *John* the Baptist, tho' a burning and shining Light, *John 5. 35.* of whom our Saviour himself gave this honourable Testimony, that among them that were born of Women, there had not risen a greater than *John* the Baptist, *Matth.*

11. 11. I say we may observe that this great Light, *John* the Baptist, had only the Honour to bear Witness to Jesus Christ the true Light, so far was he beneath him, and so much inferior to him. This wide Distance between Christ and *John* the Baptist, the Baptist himself acknowledged, saying, *There cometh one mightier than I, after me, the latchet of whose Shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose, Mark 1. 7.* So if Christ be compared with *Moses*, the greatest of all the Prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostle sets him above *Moses*, *Heb. 3. 5, 6. Moses was faithful over all his House, that is, over all God's House, as a Servant, but Christ as a Son over his own House.* So that *Moses* deliver'd the Law only as a Servant employ'd by Christ; but Christ himself was the Lawgiver, and therefore also, the only authentick Interpreter of the Law; both which he takes to himself, and challengeth as his Right, when he calls himself the Lord of the Sabbath, *Matth. 12. 8.*

Besides what hath been already spoken: That the Prophetical Office of Christ is such, as no Creature is capable of discharging, may yet further appear by what the Scriptures attribute unto Christ in this Matter.

1. This

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1. This great Prophet sends the Spirit to enlighten Mankind. *'Tis expedient for you that I go away, saith Christ to his Disciples, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you, Joh. 16. 7.* And who is this Comforter but the holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, of whom he speaks v. 13. *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.*

2. Christ as the great Prophet and Teacher of the Church, assumes to himself as his own Word, whatsoever the Spirit by him sent, taught his Apostles. *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you Things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All Things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you, John 16. 13, 14, 15.*

3. He doth not only teach externally, as other Prophets and Teachers do, but internally and efficaciously, where and when he pleaseth; he Baptizeth with the holy Ghost, and with Fire, *Mat. 13. 11.* that is, with the Spirit working upon the

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the Soul as Fire, enlightening, melting, warming, refining and purifying. He so teacheth that he gives Capacity and Understanding. *The Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding that we may know him that is true, 1 John 5. 20.* While he is Teaching, he withal opens the Understanding, and enables those whom he teacheth to apprehend and receive what is taught them, *Luke 24. 45.*

4. This great Prophet owns and professeth to have brought from Heaven what he reveals, and teacheth his Church; and that none other, besides himself, could have acquainted his Church with those Things which he makes known unto it. *No Man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him, Matth. 11. 27. No Man hath seen God at any Time, the only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John 1. 18. If I have told you earthly Things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly Things? And no Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in Heaven, John 3. 12, 13.* That is, no other beside the

Son hath been in Heaven, to be perfectly acquainted with heavenly Things, and to be able to reveal them as the Son doth.

5. This great Prophet moreover professeth and declares, that all Power in Heaven and Earth is his, and in regard of this Power, he sets up Ordinances in his Church, and institutes the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, to be continued in his Church to the End of the World. *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth. Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Mat. 28. 18, 19.* And so for the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, we have the Institution thereof also by Christ, *Mat. 26. 26, 27.* Now then let us put all these Things together, which belong to Christ's Prophetical Office, and which in relation thereunto, are ascrib'd unto him, and we cannot but conclude, that he must needs be God, who shall so discharge that Office. He who so teacheth, as that he is to be believed for himself, and all his Doctrines to be entertain'd and embrac'd as infallibly true, because he is the Author of them; he who is a Teacher that hath his Chair above all the Prophets and Apostles,

Apostles, and who dictated to them, and taught them, whatsoever they taught the Church; he who sends the holy Spirit to enlighten, inspire, and teach those who are to be Teachers of others; he who declares and asserts all that to be his own, his own Word and Truth, which by the Spirit was reveal'd to the Apostles, and by them publish'd to the World; he who doth not only teach externally, but inwardly, opening the Understanding, subduing the Heart, changing the Will: he who professeth to have brought along with him from Heaven, all that Doctrine which he imparts to the World, and that none can come to know the Things which he reveals, but by and from himself; and lastly, he who takes upon him, by his own Authority, to institute and set up Ordinances in the Church, which are to take Place and continue therein, to the End of the World; he who doth all this, how can he be any other than truly God?

I have long insisted on the Prophetical Office of Christ; I must be shorter in speaking to his Priestly and Kingly Offices.

(2)
2. As the Prophetical Office of the Mediator, so his Priestly Office, could not be discharged by any but one who is truly God. And this will appear, whether we consider his Satisfaction or Intercession, which Two are the chief Parts of his Priestly Function.

1. As touching his satisfying divine Justice, by offering up himself as an expiatory Sacrifice, to procure the Pardon of our Sins, it was necessary that the Person undertaking this, should be God. For 'tis only the divine Nature in the Person of Christ, that makes his Sufferings to be of that infinite Value, which is required for satisfying the offended and violated Justice of the infinite Majesty of God. Had Christ been but a 'meer Man, tho' as innocent as *Adam* before his Fall, tho' as spotless as the blessed Angels who never fell, yet his Sufferings being but the Sufferings of a Creature, could have been of no such Worth, as to be a meet Satisfaction to the Justice of God. The *Psalmist* saith, *That no Man can redeem his Brother, nor give unto God a Ransom for him, for the Redemption of the Soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever; that is, remains as a Thing impossible to be effected by any meer*

meer Man. Now if you say, that the *Psalmist* must there be understood of Redemption from temporal Death, the Reply is easy, and unanswerable, That if no Man can give unto God a Ransom to redeem his Brother from temporal Death, much less from Death eternal.

This will yet more full appear, if we consider,

1. The Extremity and Duration of the Punishment, which the righteous God hath threaten'd to inflict upon the Sinner. The Extremity of the Punishment is set forth in Scripture, by those Things which are most terrible to Nature ; to be cast into the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone, *Rev. 21. 8.* to dwell with devouring Fire, *Is. 33. 14.* to be tormented in scorching Flames, so as that the least Allay or Mitigation shall be denied, tho' no more than what might be expected from one Drop of Cold Water let fall upon the Tongue, *Luke 16. 24.* Then for the Duration of those Torments, that is endless: *Everlasting burnings, Is. 33. 14. The Worm that never dieth, and Fire unquenchable, Mark 9. 44. Everlasting Fire, Matth. 25. 41.* are prepared for unbelieving and impenitent Sinners.

2. The

2. The Necessity of undergoing all this, or what is equivalent to all this; what is equal to it, and bears full Proportion with it, by him who shall satisfy the Justice of God. Unless the uttermost Farthing of what God's Justice demands be paid, either in the same kind, or in what is of equal Value, his Justice is not satisfy'd, and so the Redemption of the Soul ceaseth for ever.

3. That all this is to be undergone to satisfy God's Justice for the Sin of any one single Person. For the Law threatens Death Temporal and Eternal to every particular Offender.

4. That our High-Priest under the Gospel, the High-Priest of the New Testament makes but one Oblation, offers up himself but once as a Sacrifice to expiate our Sins, *Heb. 9. 25, 28.*

5. That by dying once he satisfies God's Justice for the Sins of the whole Church of God, and purchaseth Pardon and eternal Life for all Believers, from the Beginning of the World, to the End of it. One died for all, *2-Cor. 5. 15.* and was a *Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, 1 John 2. 2.* By one Offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctify'd, *Heb. 10. 14.* that is, all
of

of them of what Age of the World, of what Place or Country soever.

6. That his Sufferings, tho' we should begin to reckon them from his Birth, were but temporary, and short in Comparison of Eternity, of that Eternity of Punishments from which all Believers are thereby delivered. These Things considered, how could our High-Priest's Oblation, or his Sufferings be of Value equal to all these extreme and everlasting Punishments, which were due to so many Millions redeemed by him for all their Sins, if the Person offering up himself once, a Sacrifice for them all, had been but a meer Man? Whence could so great a Worth and Value accrue to his Sufferings, but from the Dignity of his Person, being *θεάνθρωπος*, both God and Man? But being truly God in our Nature.

1. The Godhead so strengthen'd and upheld the human Nature, as that it was by the Power and Influence of the divine Nature unto which it was united, enabled to undergo a far greater Weight of Sufferings, than without the powerful Supports of the divine Nature it could have undergone.

2. It

2. It put an infinite Value upon those his Sufferings, tho' but Temporary, and made them equivalent to everlasting Sufferings.

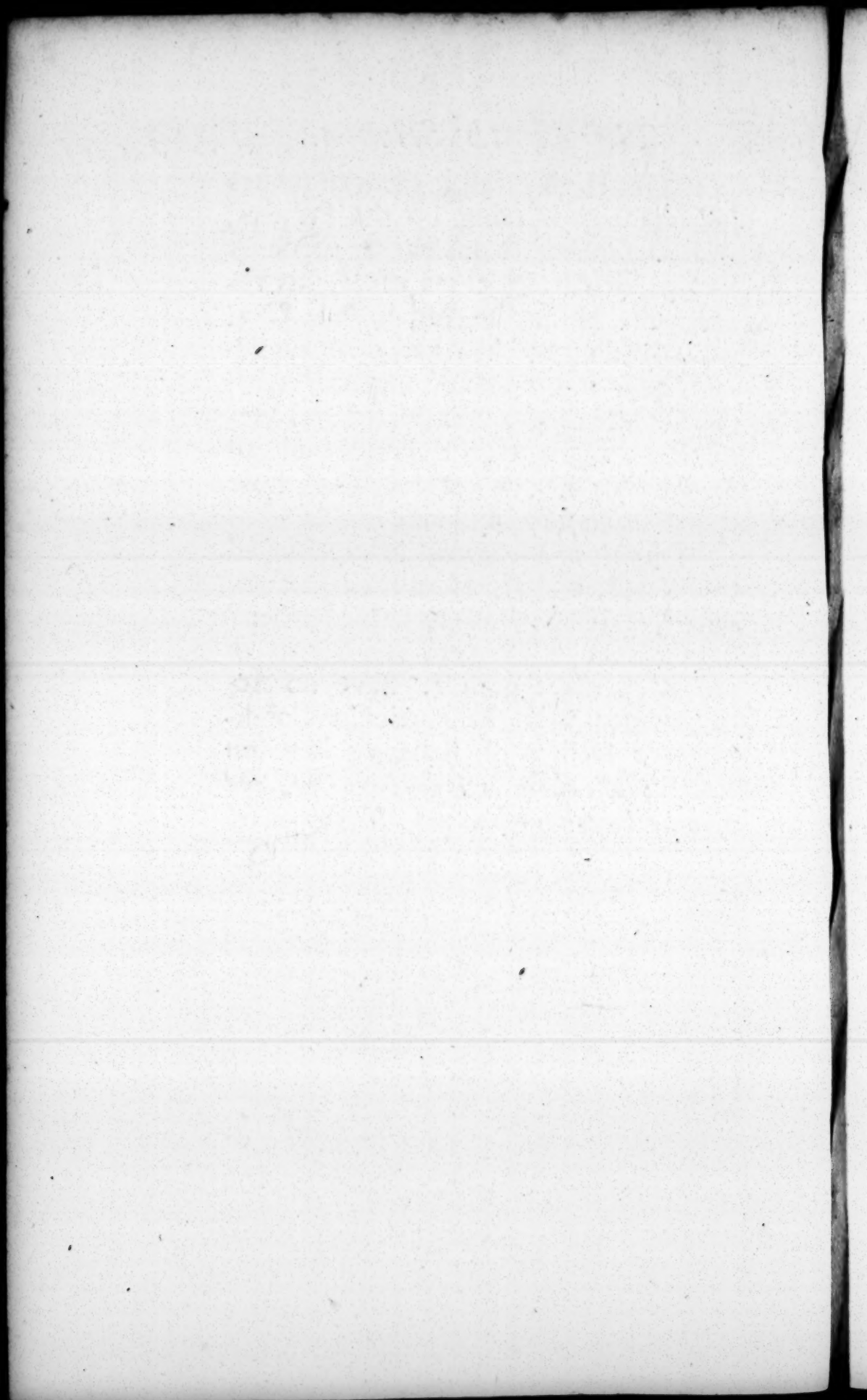
3. It speedily brought the Sufferer out from under his Sufferings; for the Person suffering being God, it was not only most easy for him to break the Bonds of Death, but impossible that he should be holden by it, *Acts 2. 24.*

II. Neither could the other Part of Christ's Priestly Office, his Intercession, be perform'd by any but such a one as is truly God. For

1. Christ our High-Priest's making Intercession for his People, presents to the Father his own Merits, and sues for that which he hath by his Blood, dearly bought and purchased, as well as for what the Father hath promised: But if the Sufferer had been no more than a Man, there could have been no Merit in his Sufferings. That which made them meritorious, so highly meritorious as to be a valuable Consideration, a full and sufficient Price for purchasing Pardon and eternal Life, for Millions of Believers, was the Dignity of the Person, his being truly God.

2. Our

2. Our High-Priest in Heaven makes Intercession, offering up the Prayers, and presenting to his Father the Suits and particular Petitions of all his redeemed. He is the Angel, *Rev. 8. 3.* who standing by the Altar, with a golden Censer in his Hand, together with the Incense of his own Merits and Mediation, offers up the Prayers of all Saints. But if he be not truly God, how can he understand and take notice of all the Prayers of all Saints throughout all the World, and represent their particular respective Conditions to his Father? The Saints in Heaven, the Spirits of just Men made perfect, have no Acquaintance with the particular Conditions or Desires of Believers here on Earth; *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not, Is. 63. 16.*



SERMON X.

Rom. ix. Ver. 5.

*Whose are the Fathers, and
of whom as concerning the
Flesh Christ came, who is
over all, God blessed for ever.
Amen.*

III. **T**HE kingly Office of Christ
also, as 'tis in Scripture set
forth and describ'd, proves
him to be God. This
might at large be shewed in all the Par-
ticulars, and proper Acts of Christ's
Kingly Office.

1. He, as King of his Church, is
possest of a Power to give Laws to his
Church. We read of the Law of Christ,
Gal. 6. 2. And it was prophesied con-
cerning him, that the Illes should wait
for his Law, *If. 42.* 4. This his legisla-
tive Power, and supreme Authority in
his

his Church he declares, when he saith, *he is greater than the Temple*, Matth. 12. 6. and that *he is Lord of the Sabbath*, v. 8. and that *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given him*, Matth. 28. 18. This I have formerly touch'd upon under another Head, and therefore shall no further insist on it here. Now such an absolute, universal, and uncontrollable Power is hereby attributed to Christ, as is not agreeable to any Creature, Man or Angel, they being all Fellow-Servants, tho' of different Ranks and Degrees. *I am thy Fellow-Servant, and of thy Brethren the Prophets*, said the Angel to St. John, Rev. 22. 9. So the Apostles every where profess themselves the Servants of Christ; and David himself, tho' he had none above him in this World, yet acknowledgeth his Subjection to Christ, calling him his Lord, Ps. 110. 1. compared with Matth. 22. 44. *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my Right-hand*. Hence 'tis, that when he was incarnate, and took Man's Nature upon him, the Apostle saith, *He was made of a Woman, made under the Law*, Gal 4. 4. and that he took upon him *the Form of a Servant*, Phil. 2. 7. Before therefore, as God, not yet incarnate

carnate or made Flesh, he was not under the Law, but above it, as being the Author and Founder of it, and above the Condition of a Servant; a supreme Lord, giving Laws unto, and requiring Obedience from the Creatures; and so as God he still continues to be, tho' in respect of his human Nature he, by his Incarnation, became subject to the Law.

Now here, if we shall further consider what kind of Laws they are which Christ gives, it will be yet more evident that he must be God that gives them.

1. The Laws of this supreme Law-giver are such, as reach all Times and Ages of the Church, all Places and Persons all the World over. For he hath supreme Authority over the World as well as over the Church, tho' Principally in relation to the Church, and with respect to the Good thereof: *He is above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but in that which is to come; and he is Head over all Things to the Church, Eph. 1. 21.* To the Church, that is, in order to the Benefit of the Church; for having supreme Authority over all the World,

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1. He

The Tenth Sermon.

1. He can thereby dispose of all Things, so as that Sinners, belonging to the Election of Grace, may be converted, and gathered out of all the World.

2. He is hereby able to defend and protect his Church against the Enemies thereof, they being all under his Power and at his Disposal.

3. His Laws are such as reach the Heart, as command and regulate the inner Man, and bind the Conscience, even in those Things which human Laws can take no Cognizance of. 'Tis the very Scope and Design of his Gospel, and that's the Law which was to go out of *Zion*, *Is. 2. 3.* I say, 'tis the very Scope and Design of the Gospel, to pull down the strong holds of Sin and Satan within us, *to cast down Imaginations, and every high Thing in the Soul, that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and to bring into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.* Men's Laws are satisfy'd with our Conformity to them in the outward Man, in the due Government of our Words and Actions; but the Law of Christ requires moreover the due inward Frame, the Uprightness and Sincerity

The Tenth Sermon.

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cerity of the Heart within, as well as the Compliance and outward Comportment of our Words and Actions, with that Rule of Life which he hath prescrib'd us. *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord and not unto Men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ, Coloss. 3. 23, 24.*

4. Christ's Laws are back'd with such Sanctions and Penalties annexed to them, as no Creature can ordain, threaten or inflict. They are no less than Damnation, *Mark 16. 16. John 3. 18. everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power, 2 Thess. 1. 9. To be for ever and ever tormented with the Worm that never dieth, and in the Fire that never goeth out, Mark 9. 46.* Which Punishments, who can either appoint, or threaten, or inflict, but God?

2. Christ's Kingly Office proves him to be God, as in regard he hath thereby a Power to give Laws, so likewise in respect of the Government, he exerciseth by, and according to those Laws. Tho' in respect of his human Nature he be in Heaven, and the Heavens must receive and contain him, until the Times

of Restitution of all Things, until his second coming, *Acts 3. 21.* yet he governs the World, and more especially his Church, in all Ages and Places of the World; most wisely and powerfully over-ruling the Affairs of his Church, and of all the World, for *the Government is upon his Shoulder, Is. 9. 6. All Judgment is committed to him, John 5. 22.* This is he of whom the Prophet speaks, *Jer. 23. 5, 6. Behold a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute Judgment and Justice in the Earth; and this is his Name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.* For the Exercise of his universal, most wise, and powerful Government, there is necessarily required.

1. More Power than belongs to any Creature. What Power less than God's, less than Omnipotence, can order, dispose of, manage, and over-rule the Affairs of one Kingdom, so as nothing shall be done, or come to pass, but according to the good Pleasure, or by the Permission of him, who holds the Reins of Government in his Hand? And yet the managing of the Government of all the Nations and Kingdoms of the World, and every particular Person therein, and
that

that in all Times and Ages, is a far greater Matter. He who doth this, must be one who hath all second Causes, all Means and Instruments, all Influences and Motions, all Counsels and Designs, all Hearts and Spirits at his Command. He can be no other than He who hath the Hearts even of Kings in his Hand, as the Rivers of Water, and turneth them whither-soever he will, *Prov. 21. 1.* who hath said, *my Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure, Is. 46. 10.* and he who worketh all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will, *Eph. 1. 11.* there being no other Power to oppose or obstruct the Accomplishment of what he undertakes.

2. More Knowledge also is required, than any meer Creature is furnished with. He who governs and over-rules all the Affairs of the Church and of the World, must know all Things, must have exact and thorough Acquaintance with all Affairs, and all the Circumstances of them, with all secret Counsels, Projects, and Designs; with all the Ways of the Children of Men, and with every inward Thought and Device of the Heart: Without this perfect Acquaintance with, and unerring Un-

derstanding, and full Comprehension of all Things in the World, he who sits at the Helm and rules the World, would often be at a Loss, and miss the Mark; would often fall short of ordering all Matters according to his Mind, and of doing all his Pleasure. And is any Creature Master of such universal and exact Knowledge of Things? No, the wisest, and he who hath the largest Understanding, the most deep and piercing intellectual Faculty, must say with the Psalmist, *Pf. 139. 6. Such Knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

Furthermore 'tis evident, that the King of Saints, as Christ is stil'd, *Rev. 15. 3.* the King of the Church, cannot manage the Government thereof, without such Power and Knowledge, as no meer Creature is capable of, because the Government which he exerciseth over his Church is spiritual, and such as principally concerns the inner Man, the Soul. He hath his Throne in the Heart, and there he sways his Scepter. For,

1. Who can subdue and change Hearts, who can in the Day of his Power make a willing People, an humble, tractable
and

and obedient People, as he doth, *Pf.* 110. 3. of those who were proud, rebellious, obstinate, and untractable? Who can do this but he who can do all Things? Again,

2. Having subdued obstinate Sinners, and brought them into Subjection to himself, and set up his spiritual Kingdom in their Hearts, how could he keep them in Subjection? how could he carry on the spiritual Government set up in their Souls, until he *send forth Judgment unto Victory*, as the Evangelist *St. Matth.* 12. 20. renders the Prophecy concerning him, *Is.* 42. 3? Is the infusing of Grace into the Soul, and the preserving and keeping it alive, the improving and increasing of it when infused, a Work for any but God?

3. Another Thing belonging to the Kingly Office of Christ, and which likewise proves him to be God, is his defending and protecting his Church against all adversary Power. Considering the many potent, subtil, malicious, and enraged Enemies which the Church of Christ hath, and that all the Powers of Hell, and of the wicked World, of Devils and wicked Men conspire against it, it is utterly impossible that any

should protect it, but he whose Power no Creature can resist. It was a great Word that Christ spake, a most full and emphatical Promise of Protection to his, that *the Gates of Hell should not prevail against the Church, Matth. 16. 18.* who could make such a Promise but he who being God, hath all the Creatures in Subjection to him, against whose Will, and without whose Order or Permission they can do nothing?

Neither doth this King of Saints only check and restrain the Enemies of his Church, but he utterly vanquisheth them, and destroys them. *He must reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet, 1 Cor. 15. 25.* Not only wicked Men, all such as are implacable Enemies to his Church among them, but the Devil, and Death, and Hell.

1. The Devil. Christ took Part of our Flesh and Blood, he took our Nature on him, *that through Death he might destroy him who had the Power of Death, that is the Devil, Heb. 2. 14.* By his Death he doth not only overcome the Devil, but leads him in triumph. *Having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them, Coloss. 2. 15.* Which Expressions

pressions the Apostle borrows from the Manner of the Romans triumphs after Victories, in which they led their Captives in Chains, and exposed them to the publick View of the People. So the Apostle to shew the Fulness and the Glory of Christ's Victory over the Devils by his Death, saith, he spoiled Principalities and Powers, and made a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them.

2. He also vanquish'd and triumph'd over Death. By his Death satisfying for our Sins, and procuring the Pardon of them, he disarmed Death, and took away its Sting, so as now it cannot hurt the Believer: Nay, he destroyed Death, by purchasing eternal Life and Immortality for all that by Faith embrace him. This Christ's Victory over Death, the Prophet foretold, *Hos. 13. 14.* where he brings in Christ, or God thus speaking, *I will ransom them from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death; O Death, I will be thy Plagues: O Grave, I will be thy Destruction.* This the Apostle understands of Christ, in whose Victory he also triumphs, saying, *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin; and the Strength of Sin is the Law.*

But

But Thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57.

3. He vanquisheth and destroyeth Hell, as well as Death. For tho' it shall for ever continue to be the Prison of all the damned, of the whole crew of evil Angels and wicked Men, yet it shall be in Effect abolished and destroyed, it shall be as if it were not in reference to all Believers: They shall be no more afraid of it, no more in Danger of it, than as if no such Place were, or ever had been. In this Sense we are to understand that Part of St. *Jehn's* Vision, *Rev. 20. 14.* where after the Representation of the Day of Judgment unto him, he saith, *he saw Death and Hell cast into the Lake of Fire.* And by whom is this done but by Christ, who is there represented as sitting upon a great white Throne, *v. 11.* *Jesus who delivers us from the Wrath to come,* *1 Thess. 1. 10.* and who saith, *he hath the Keys of Hell, and of Death,* *Rev. 1. 10.* Now let us but consult our own Reason, and judge whether these great Things could be done by any created Power; and whether he who is furnished with Power for effecting them, must not be concluded to be God?

4. Ano-

4. Another Thing comprehended under his Kingly Office, is his judging the World at the last Day. This great Transaction he manageth as King, for that's the Title which is given unto him, *Matth. 25.* where the Proceedings of that great Day are described, as we may see, *v. 34.* *Then shall the King say unto them on his Right-hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundations of the World:* and again, *v. 40.* In the Execution of this Part of his Kingly Office, how many Things are there that cannot be transacted by any besides him who is truly God?

1. The raising the Dead, and re-uniting their Souls unto their Bodies, which is Christ's Work, *John 6. 40.* *John 11. 25.* *1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 22.* how great a Work is this! If the Raising of any one single Person, as *Lazarus*, who died but a few Days before, be a great Work, and an Argument of Almightyness in him who shall effect it, what's the gathering together the scattered Dust of so many Millions, of all that ever died from the Beginning of the World to the End? What is it to command those out of their Graves,
who

who died and were turned to Dust some Thousands of Years past, and to give them all their own Bodies and Souls, and make them stand up as a vast Army that shall even cover the Face of the whole Earth, and all this in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye! How powerful a Voice, think you, must he have, who shall say to the Sea, and to Death, and Hell, give up your Dead, and instantly be obey'd!

2. The wonderful and stupendous Change of our Bodies, which shall then be raised, is a Work that argues him to be God who shall effect it. That this our frail and corruptible Body, should put on Incorruption, that this our mortal and dying Body, should put on Immortality, is an amazing Thing, and yet this also is Christ's Work, *who shall change our vile Body, and make it like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty Working whereby he is able to subdue all Things to himself, Phil. 3. 21.*

3. The compelling of all the wicked and ungodly of the Earth, that ever have lived upon the Face thereof, to come and stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, to receive their Sentence of eternal Condemnation, together with
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all the Devils in Hell, who must then also make their Appearance to receive their final Doom; this also is the Work of him who hath Men and Devils at his Command. For with what Unwillingness and Reluctancy may we conceive them to be drag'd before the Tribunal of Christ, who shall then *call to the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb, Rev. 6. 16?* What would they do or suffer, that they might not then appear? Surely they would be content to be crush'd to Pieces a Thousand Times, if it were possible, or to be turned into nothing, rather than to present themselves before the King, to be by his Mouth adjudg'd to endless Torments.

4. To call all the World to a particular Account, to examine all the Thoughts, Words and Actions of Men, of every particular Person, to take particular Cognizance of all Things that he hath done in the Flesh, whether good or bad, and accordingly to pass a righteous Sentence upon him; who is sufficient for this Work, but he whose sole Prerogative it is to know all Things,
to

to be *the Searcher of Hearts*, *Jer.* 17. 10.
to be *the Revealer of Secrets*, *Dan.* 2. 28.
and to *bring to Light the hidden Things of
Darkness*, *1 Cor.* 4. 5. It were a very
great and wonderful Thing to examine
all the Thoughts, Words and Actions
of any one Man, who hath lived in any
Age: What is it then to take an exact
and particular Account of all that ever
shall have lived from the Creation of
Adam, till the coming of *Christ* to
Judgment? To say nothing of the De-
vils, all whose Actions must also be
scanned, in order to the passing of a
righteous Sentence upon them. And
this is also further considerable in this
great Transaction, that none beside the
Searcher of the Heart, and Tryer of the
Reins, can pass Judgment upon a Man
for any one external Action, whether
good or bad: For tho' the outward Act
be manifest to the Eye of the World, yet
the Degree of the Goodness or Badness
of the Action depends upon the inward
Frame of the Heart. God only knows
perfectly the secret Ends and Motives
of Men's Actions: he only discerns from
what Degree of inward Malignity of
the Heart bad Actions proceed; as also
what inward Workings of Grace had

an Influence upon good Actions. Wherefore the King who judgeth the World, must be God, who can look into the Heart, and take Notice of all secret Workings thereof; for otherwise he could not pass a righteous Sentence upon the Sinner, for any one Word or Action of his whole Life.

5. The Execution of the Sentence that shall be pronounced, which is to be done, as by the Authority, so by the Power of the Judge, argues him to be God.

1. For the Execution of the Sentence of Condemnation on the wicked, this is Christ's Work, who at that Day takes Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel, *2 Theff. 1. 8.* To say to all the wicked of the World, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, and together with that terrible Word, to thrust them all into Hell, to inflict the Torments of Hell upon their Bodies and Souls, and to shut them up in that Prison, without Hope of being released thence to Eternity, this is that which only the almighty and irresistible Power of God can effect; and this Power the Apostle ascribes to Christ in

in this Matter, when he adds concerning all those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel, that they shall be punish'd with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power, *2 Thess. 1. 9.* that is, from his glorious Power, by an Hebraism: This glorious Power, which is put forth in the everlasting Destruction of the wicked, our Saviour appropriates to God, *Matth. 10. 28.* saying, *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.*

2. So likewise for the Execution of the Sentence of Absolution; to give eternal Life to all his Sheep, as Christ promiseth, *John 10. 28.* to admit them into the Kingdom of Heaven, and to give them actual Possession thereof; not only to say to them, *come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World,* but to crown them with all the Glory and Felicity, to fill them with all the ineffable Joys and Pleasures of that Kingdom, and to settle and establish them in the Possession and blissful Fruition of them to Eternity, to whom can it

it belong to do all this, but to him alone
in whose Presence is the Fulness of Joy, and
at whose Right-hand there are Pleasures
for evermore? Ps. 16. 11.

And so I have done with what concerns the Confirmation of this Truth.

I now proceed to make some brief Application.

1. This shews how perversly, and dangerously they err, who hold and teach that Christ is not God; whether they be *Arians*, or *Photinians*, or *Samosatenians*, or *Socinians*, or any other under what Names or Disguises soever they shelter themselves. Tho' these may differ from one another in some Circumstances, yet so far as they all agree in the Maxim, that Christ is not God, but a meer Man, or a meer Creature, and no more, they err most perversly, and most dangerously.

1. Most perversly; for we see the whole Current of Scripture is against them, so that they cannot hold their Opinion without wresting the Gospel, and darkening the clearest Scriptures. And in Truth 'tis manifest to any who peruse their Writings, that to defend their Errors they are enforced to stretch their Wits to bend and pervert the Scrip-

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tures, that they may force their own Senses upon them; than which there cannot be a greater Prejudice to their Cause, or a more convincing Argument of the Unsoundness of their Tenets. But on the other Side, the Deity of Christ is most agreeable to the Analogy of Faith, and the whole Stream of the Scripture, there being scarce any Truth which may be confirmed with stronger more and pregnant Testimonies, than this. The Apostle saith that an Heretick is *ἑκασταυτοῦ*, condemned of himself, *Tit. 3. 11.* And such, if any other, do these Men seem to be, who cannot easily be conceived thus to err, without the inward Contradictions and Gainsayings of their own Reason, sometimes rising up against them; at least, unless at length for their perverse Opposition against the Truth, they are judicially blinded and hardened, unless they be given over, and delivered up *εἰς ἀδόκιμον νῦν*, to a reprobate Mind, and God send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie, as those of whom the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 1. 28. 2 Theff. 2. 11.*

2. They err most dangerously. For as I have shewed, that Christ is God,
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is a weighty and fundamental Truth, without the Belief whereof there is no Possibility of Salvation. The whole Stress of our Salvation, and of all our Hopes of future Happiness, rests on it. That the Doctrine which rejects and opposeth the Deity of Christ, is not only most false, but most dangerous, pernicious and destructive, and such as we may without Breach of Charity, say, cannot consist with the State of Grace and Salvation, in any Man that holds it, may further appear, if we consider these ensuing Particulars.

1. It manifestly overthrows the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, in Opposition to Works. The Apostle saith peremptorily, that *by the Deeds of the Law shall no Flesh be justified, Rom. 3. 20. and v. 28.* and, as many as are of the Law, that is, as are for Justification by the Works of the Law, are under the Curse, *Gal. 3.* But now the Socinian, who denies the Deity of Christ, sends a Man to his own inherent Righteousness for Justification; and so of Necessity must all those do, who deny Christ to be God: for if Christ were but a meer Man, or a meer Creature, then his Righteousness could justify none but

himself. Neither the Righteousness of *Adam*, in the State of Innocency, nor the Righteousness of the Angels, that never fell, could avail for the Justification of any, but themselves. The perfect and spotless Righteousness of all the blessed Angels in Heaven put together, could not justify one Sinner; because not any one of those glorious Spirits hath any Righteousness to spare, or hath any more than to serve his Turn, for his own personal Justification. And if the perfect Righteousness of Christ, were but the Righteousness of a Creature, the Righteousness of a meer Man, the Case would be the very same. This Doctrine therefore which denies Christ to be a God, if it be entertained, cuts a Man off from Salvation, in as much as it subverts the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, in Opposition to Works, without which, there is no Salvation. St. Paul, *Gal. 5. 4.* speaking to those, who by false Teachers were informed, that a Man could not be sav'd, unless he were circumcised, and that it was necessary that Circumcision and Faith in Christ, should be join'd together; I say, speaking to those, he saith, *Christ is become of no Effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified*

fied by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace. But what would the Apostle have said, if a Generation of Men had risen up, who would not only have thrust in Circumcision, but wholly have excluded Faith in Christ, and set up a Righteousness of their own, for Justification?

2. It undermines and subverts the Satisfaction of Christ, as you have formerly heard at large. For if he be but a Man, or a meer Creature, his Obedience and Sufferings cannot be of that infinite Value, which is necessary for making amends to the Justice of God, for the Sins of Men; without which there is no Pardon of Sin, and consequently no Salvation. This Consequence the *Socinians* themselves acknowledge, and therefore denying the Deity of Christ, they plainly and expressly deny the Satisfaction of Christ, and say that Christ never intended the satisfying of God's Justice, by his Sufferings, and that God forgives Sin purely out of Mercy, without respect to any Satisfaction at all. A Doctrine contrary to the whole Tenour of the Scriptures, which hold forth Christ dying on the Cross, as a propitiatory Sacrifice for Sinners, *Rom. 3. 25.* and Pardon

of Sin, to be *the purchase of his Blood*, Eph. 1. 7. and inform us, that *without Blood, there is no Remission of Sins*, Heb. 9. 22.

3. The Denial of the Deity of Christ, is a plain denying of Christ, and a disclaiming of Christianity. This may at the first mentioning of it, sound harshly in some Men's Ears, and seem to be too hard and over-rigorous a Censure. But let the Matter be well consider'd, and it will appear to be not so harsh, as true.

1. The Denial of the Deity of Christ, is a plain denying of Christ. For if a Man should rob God of his Attributes, and the essential Properties of the divine Nature; if a Man should deprive him of his Eternity, of his Omnipotence, of his Omniscience, and Omnipresence, and the like; he would thereby plainly deny him to be God, and make him a meer Creature. For that which hath a Beginning in Time, and therefore some Time was not; that which is not infinite and immense, but hath a finite and limited Being, and is comprehended within certain Bounds, without which, it is not; that whose Power, Wisdom, and Goodness is finite
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and limited, must of Necessity be no more than a Creature, whatever Name or Title you should bestow upon it. You might call it God, if you pleased, but 'tis impossible that it should be what you call it; for God is infinite and incomprehensible in his Essence or Nature, and in all his Perfections.

So for Christ, he being God and Man in one Person, and that being his Nature as Christ, if you deprive him of his Godhead, you make him cease to be Christ. You may call him Christ if you please; but as you have now made him, this is not the Messiah, the Christ promised to the *Jews*, and in the Fullness of Time, sent into the World, to save Sinners. You plainly deny that Christ, which the Gospel holds forth, and frame a Christ out of your own Brain, and according to your Fancy; and you call him your Saviour, and expect Salvation from him; but in vain shall you expect it, for you have disabled him to save you; you have divested him of his divine Nature, made him a meer Man, or Creature, and so you have made him unfit and unable for the discharge of all his Offices, as Christ. As you conceive of him, he is utterly

unable to discharge only the Functions of his Mediator-ship ; he cannot perform the Functions, either of his Prophe- tical, or Priestly, or Kingly Office : and what a Christ then have you made him ? You have left him the bare Name of Christ, and nothing else ; the Thing intended and signified by the Name, you have taken quite away, and abolish'd.

2. They who deny Christ to be God, do in Effect disclaim Christianity, and tho' they call themselves Christians, yet are they, upon the Matter, no more Christians, than a *Turk* is. For even the *Turks* acknowledge Christ to have been a great Prophet, and speak honour- ably of him ; and what do they more who deny him to be God, and deny his Satisfaction, and will have us to be justi- fied not by him, but by our own Righ- teousness ? That blasphemous Heretick *Servetus*, who denied the Deity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, and consequent- ly the Doctrine of the Trinity, for which his heretical Opinions, he was af- terwards burnt ; He, I say, divulging and spreading this horrid Blasphemy throughout all Christendom almost, was wont to say, that the Doctrine of the Trinity, that is to say, of the Deity and

and Personality of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, was the great Makebate, and Incendiary of the World; and that were it not for that Doctrine, We, and the *Turks*, might be reconcil'd, and agree together very well, and so might the Effusion of much Blood, and many cruel Wars, and the sad Desolations and Miseries attending them, be prevented. These were the Motives, that he made use of, to perswade Men to reject the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, as the *Socinians* do; wherefore this Heretick saw very well, that they, who deny the Deity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, might easily conform to the *Alcoran*, the wide Distance between us, being thereby much narrowed. But to return to our Business, a Christian is not one, who bears the Name of Christ, denying his Nature, and over-throwing all his Offices, and by consequence denying Pardon of Sin, and Salvation, to be obtained by Christ in that Way, in which alone, Christ hath purchased it for us; but he is a Christian, who embraceth, and believeth, what the Scriptures reveal, concerning Christ's Person and Offices, and the Way of Salvation through him. To
believe

believe and embrace these Things, and to look for the Pardon of our Sins, and the everlasting Salvation of our Souls, in, and by the Merits, and Satisfaction of Christ, and no otherwise ; and withal to frame our Lives, and order our Conversations, according to the Doctrine and Precepts of Christ, this is Christianity. But let a Man talk of Christ, and call himself a Christian, and profess himself to be such as long as he will, if he deny the Nature, and Person of Christ, and over-throw his Offices, and set up another Method of the Forgiveness of our Sins, and the Salvation of our Souls, than Christ hath in his Gospel revealed, he hath in Truth quitted and disclaim'd the Christian Religion ; he hath renounc'd true Christianity, and is a Christian only in Name, and not in Reality.

3. To deny Christ to be God, is the highest, and most horrid Sacrilege, the most accursed Blasphemy indeed, as well as Sacrilege. If it be Sacrilege to rob Temples, to take away any sacred Things, that are dedicated to God, and set apart for holy Uses, what is it to rob Christ of his Deity ? To divest him of his Godhead ? To dethrone him, and pull

pull him down from his Excellency?
To equal Him with the Creatures, who
is over all, God blessed for ever?

Use 1. Let's therefore censure none
as uncharitable, for their Zeal against
this Soul-destroying, and damnable He-
resy. What is there which calls for
greater Zeal, than when the very
Foundations of our Religion, are under-
mined and blown up?

When the Children of *Dan*, *Judg.*
18. 23, 24. who had taken away *Mi-*
cah's Teraphim and Images, demand-
ed of him, what ailed him, that he pur-
su'd them with such a Company; he
reply'd, *Ye have taken away my Gods which*
I made, and the Priest, and ye are gone
away; and what have I more? And what
is this that ye say unto me, What aileth
thee? So zealous was he for his false
Gods, and the Furniture of his idola-
trous Worship. His Zeal for his idola-
trous Trinkets and false Worship, will
rise up in Judgment against us, for our
Coldness and Lukewarmness, if we
should tamely and patiently suffer our
Christ to be taken away from us, and
shew no Resentment of it. If any Man
ask, what ails us, that we make so much
noise about the Deity of Christ, we may
reply,

reply, and that truly, they would take away our Christ, and with him, our God, and our Hopes of Heaven, and eternal Happiness; for without Christ, we should be without an Interest in God, as our God, and without Hope, as the Apostle speaks, *Eph. 2. 12*. And is there not a Cause? What have we more to lose, that any should say what ailes us, that we make so much ado about these Things? Let them, who never understood what Christ is worth, be contented, that Men should use him as they please, and despoil and strip him of his Deity; as for them, they will not concern themselves therewith; but let none of us, who know how to prize Christ, be of that indifferent and lukewarm Temper, in a Matter of so high and weighty Importance, and in which, as the Salvation of our Souls, so the Honour of Christ, is so much concern'd.

But you will say, the *Socinians* allow Christ to be God, and therefore cannot justly be charg'd with having rob'd him of his Honour. I answer, they allow him the Name and Title of God, but the Thing, the Nature of God, they deny him. They say he is called God, as Magistrates and Angels were, tho' they

they be Creatures ; they say that God honours him with the Stile and Title of God, and that he is so by Favour, and Donation, or Free-gift, but not by Nature, or Essence. And they will afford him many of God's honourable Titles, as a Person of great Eminency, and highly in God's Favour ; but while they in truth rob him of his Deity, in the mean-while, what do they else by all the Honour, which they seem to cast upon him in their Language, but deal with him, as *Judas* did, kiss him, and betray him ?

Use 2. Let us therefore not only disclaim, but heartily abhor and detest this blasphemous Heresy ; and let us in all due Means, upon all just Occasions, shew our Detestation thereof. There is in many, too great an Indifferency in this Matter.

1. There are those who are not ashamed to plead for Men of that damnable Opinion, give me leave to call it so, for it will certainly damn any Man, that perseveres in it to the End, without Repentance. There are those, who, tho' they profess to be Orthodox themselves, yet are so favourable to *Socinians*, and others of the like desperate Principles, that
they

they cannot endure to hear a Word spoken against them, who, instead of pleading for the Truth, are upon all Occasions ready to plead for the Enemies thereof, endeavouring to qualify and extenuate their heretical Opinions, and representing them in such a Manner, as if there were no great Danger, or Evil in them. But I would desire all such to consider,

1. How little Love they herein shew to Christ their Saviour, who are so ready to take Part with his Enemies, and to treat them so kindly and favourably, who rob him of his Deity. True Love to Christ would fill the Heart with holy Indignation, against what so wretchedly derogates from him, and so foully stains and blasts his Honour.

2. I would desire them to consider, with what Face they will appear before Christ, at the Day of Judgment, if they really believe there is such a Day. What other Entertainment can they expect from Christ, but that he should frown upon them, and ask them how they dare to expect Salvation from him, who have taken Part with his Enemies, and never wanted a good Word to speak in their Behalf; and had not a Word to say
for

for him, when wicked Men endeavour'd to divest him of his Deity, and to bring him down to the Rank of their fellow Creatures.

2. There are some, who are not only ready to plead for the Enemies of the Deity of Christ, at a Distance, but chuse to keep company with them, making them their Associates, and holding friendly Correspondence with them; there are, who join themselves to them, and maintain intimate Acquaintance, and bosom Friendship and Familiarity with them, as if there were none, in whose Society they took more Satisfaction. How this can consist, either with that true Love to Christ, or with that Zeal for the Honour of Christ, and that Care of their own Salvation, which every sound Christian ought to have, is not easy to be understood: The Apostle forbids us to keep company with those, that walk disorderly, and irregularly, tho' they make Profession of the same Truths, that we do, *2 Thess. 3. 6.* How much more then, is the Company of such blasphemous Hereticks, to be avoided? St. *John* would have us to keep at the greatest Distance from these. *If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine*

ctrine, that is, the Doctrin of Christ, as he is revealed in the Gospel, *receive him not into your House, nor bid him Godspeed,* 2 *John* 10. Shut the Door against him, and utter not a Word, which may give him occasion of thinking, you have any Friendship for him. And there is great Reason for it, whether we consider them, or our selves, to say nothing here of the Honour of Christ, being so nearly touch'd, and highly concern'd, of which I have spoken somewhat before.

1. We hereby encourage, strengthen, and harden them in their Way. They hereupon conclude, that tho' we will not acknowledge our selves to be of their Mind, yet we have no great Dislike of their Persons, or Opinions; if we had, we would not so familiarly converse with them, and take that Pleasure we seem to have, in their Society. This doubtless is that, which St. *John* intends, when he adds, in the Place before-mentioned, *He that biddeth him God speed, is Partaker of his evil Deeds*; he doth encourage and strengthen him, in his evil Way, and derives the Guilt of his Sin, upon himself.

2. By intimate and constant Familiarity with erroneous Persons, we run a great

great Hazard of being drawn away our selves. Hereby we tempt God to give us up to their Delusions. At first we may have no Propension or Inclination to take up their Opinions; but yet by insensible Degrees that may creep on upon us, which we thought our selves sufficiently fortified and secured against. Heresy is of an infectious, and spreading Nature, it eats *like a Canker*, 2 Tim. 2. 17. To be short, if we choose to join and unite our selves to such here, let us take heed lest we be number'd among them hereafter. Would you be placed at the Left-hand of Christ, when he shall sit to judge the World? Would you then appear amidst the whole Crew of those cursed Hereticks, and avow'd Enemies of Christ; *Arius*, and *Ebion*, and *Cerinthus*, and *Photinus*, and *Bladrata*, and *Servetus*, and *Socinus*? Dare you venture your Soul with them, and share with them in the same Sentence, at that great and terrible Day of the Lord? God warns his People to forsake *Babylon*, Rev. 18. 4. saying, *Come out of her my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues.* You are no less concern'd in that Warning; apply it to your selves;

and as you would not receive of the Plagues reserved for Hereticks, so beware that ye partake not with them in their Sin, either by entertaining or encouraging their heretical Opinions.

And as for you who deny the Deity of Christ, and, by Consequence, his Satisfaction, and set up a Way of Justification which hath no Warrant in the Word of God, and is directly contrary to that Way of Justification which the Gospel holds forth, and which the true Church of God accordingly hath in all Ages of the Church embrac'd and maintain'd; do you indeed believe the Immortality of the Soul, and the two different Estates of everlasting Happiness or Misery in another World? And do you make Account to escape the One, and to be made Partaker of the Other? Do you verily hope to be Saved? What? in a Way peculiar to your self, and a few others, and different from that Way in which alone the true Church of Christ hath ever expected Salvation? Must there be a new Gospel, and a new Way to Heaven to save you? Or have you only found out the right Way? And have the Churches of God in all Ages, for want of your Light, miscarried and perished?

perished? Think not so highly of your selves, or of your Way. But if you be perverse, and resolved to adhere obstinately to your own Ways, then do it at your Peril: But let every true Christian say, let my Faith be the same with the Faith of the universal Church of Christ, let my latter End be like unto theirs, and let my Soul be with them. My Soul is precious to me, and I am resolv'd to venture it with none but the whole Church of Christ; with it if I everlastingly perish, I perish.

Use 3. What Cause have we to bless God, who hath been graciously pleased,

1. To make such Provision for the Recovery, Securing, and Saving of our lost Souls? What abundant Matter of Thankfulness is it, that when we were weak, utterly unable to help our selves, or to rescue our captivated Souls out of the Hands of our spiritual Enemies, God was pleased to lay help upon one that is mighty, as the Psalmist speaks, *Pf. 89. 19.* that he hath been pleased to commit the great Work of our Redemption to one, who is of sufficient Strength to go through with it; that he hath put this high Concernment of our Souls into able Hands!

B b 2

2. That

2. That he hath also been pleased to reveal this to us, and that he hath in some good Measure settled and established our Hearts in the Belief of this great Truth, so as we have not been led away with the Error of the wicked, and that tho' we have met with Temptations, yet through the Goodness of God, we have not been overcome by them! That notwithstanding all the Assaults of our spiritual Enemies, we still keep our Footing, and adhere to the Truth, even when so many have made Shipwrack of their Faith!

Use 5. Let us with humble Confidence, and holy Security, commit all the Concernments of our Souls unto Christ. Having trusted him with your Soul, you may say with the Apostle, 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know whom I have believ'd, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.*

Let us therefore depend on him, and fly unto him, in all our own, and the Church's Exigencies. Forasmuch as he is mighty to save, and ready to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

2 Chron. xxxii. Ver. 31.

*Howbeit, in the business of the
Embassadors of the Princes
of Babylon, who sent unto
him to enquire of the Wonder
that was done in the Land,
God left him to try him, that
he might know all that was
in his Heart.*

BABYLON is by some judged
to have been Seven Hundred
Miles distant from Jerusalem:
yet thither had the Report come, of
the strange Recovery of Hezekiah out
of his Sickness, and of the miraculous
Confirmation of his Faith in his Re-
covery, by the going back of the Sun
Ten Degrees. This great Work of God,
together with the Circumstances there-

B b 3

of,

of, *Berodach-baladan* King of *Babylon*, desires to be fully acquainted with, and therefore he causeth his Counsellors to send Embassadors to *Hezekiah* concerning it; which are here said to be the Embassadors of the Princes of *Babylon*, that is, some great Men about the King of *Babylon* who were of his Counsel. *Hezekiah* being lifted up with great Things that God had done for him, and particularly with his being now become, upon that Account, so famous in remote Countries, gladly entertains these Embassadors, and in the Pride of his Heart, not only acquaints them with the Circumstances of his miraculous Recovery; but, in that Way of vain-glorious Ostentation, sheweth them all his Treasures, and all the precious Things that were in his House, and moreover, whatsoever was considerable, and of special Remark in his Kingdom, as we may see in the 2 *Kings* 20. This was the Business of the Embassadors of the Princes of *Babylon*, in which God is said to have *left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart*: It was a great Sin in him to be lifted up with those great Mercies, that should have laid him low and have humbled him. Now whereas so good
a Man,

a Man, and so excellent a Prince, as *Hezekiah* is before describ'd to have been, was so shamefully overtaken, we may observe,

1. That the best Men, nay some of the most eminent Servants of God, have not been free from some great Miscarriages. *Noah*, tho' otherwise a Man *righteous in his Generation*, as God himself testified concerning him, *Gen. 7. 1.* yet was once overtaken with Drunkenness, *Gen. 9. 21.* *Lot* is drunken, and committeth Incest with his Daughters, *Gen. 19. 31, 32.* *Abraham* denies his Wife, *Gen. 20.* and the same after him did *Isaac*, *Gen. 26. 7.* *Jacob* being thereunto perswaded and instructed by *Rebekah* his Mother, tells a plain Untruth, and thereby deceiveth his aged Father, *Gen. 27. 19, 20.* *Joseph* in *Egypt* swears by the Life of *Pharaoh*, *Gen. 42. 15.* *Aaron* being induced thereunto by the Importunity of the People, makes a golden Calf, *Exod. 32. 1, 2, 3, 4.* *Moses*, tho' the meekest Man upon the Earth, is by the perverse Carriage of the People, transported to speak unadvisedly with his Lips, *Numb. 20. 10, 11, 12.* and *Pf. 106. 33.* The Failings and Miscarriages of *Sampson* recorded in his Life,

Judg. 14, 15, 16. are so great, that a Man might hardly have deemed them consistent with true Grace, had he not been reckon'd in the Catalogue of Believers, *Heb.* 11. 32. *Eli* too mildly and gently treats his wicked and lewd Sons, when their high Provocations had been such, as no Severity against them could have been too great, and when his dealing so favourably with them, was to honour them more than God, as God himself chargeth him to have done, *1 Sam.* 2. 24, 29. *David*, tho' otherwise a Man after God's own Heart, Sinn'd most foully and shamefully in the Matters of *Uriah* and *Bathsheba*, *2 Sam.* 11. 12. *Jehoshaphat* is prevailed with to go up to *Ramoth-Gilead* to battle with wicked *Ahab*, for which the Prophet *Jehu*, the Son of *Hanani* sharply rebukes him, saying, *Wilt thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is there Wrath upon thee from before the Lord,* *2 Chron.* 19. 2. *Josiah* adventures to go forth to battle against *Pharaoh Necho* to the Loss of his Life, against the Warning given him by *Necho*, speaking to him from the Mouth of God, *2 Chron.* 35. 22. *Job*, tho' most renown'd for his Patience, was once so disturb'd,

disturb'd, that he Cursed the Day of his Birth, *Job* 3. 2, 13. The Prophet *Jeremiah* doth the like, *Jer.* 20. 14. *Jonah* wilfully disobeyeth the exprefs Command of God, and goeth to *Tarshish* when God had sent him to *Nineveh*, *Jonah* 1. 1, 2, 3. Afterwards he is angry that God had caused the Gourd to wither, which protected him from the Heat; and when God mildly reproveth him, saying, *Dost thou well to be angry?* he justified his Passion with greater Passion, replying, *I do well to be angry even unto Death*, *Jonah* 4. 9. *Peter* denieth his Master, and confirmeth his Denial of him, by Cursing and Swearing, *Matth.* 26. 74. *Paul* and *Barnabas* fell out, and the Contention between them comes at length to be so hot, and to rise so high, that in displeasure they part asunder from one another, *Acts* 15. 39. By these many sad Instances, the Truth of the Point is but too well confirmed; it were well, that there were fewer Instances to prove, that the best Men, and some of the most eminent Servants of God, have not been free from great Miscarriages. The Reasons of this Point are evident.

1. The

1. The best Men have the same original Corruption with others, disposing them, and strongly inclining them to what is evil. That is an universal Truth, That *every Imagination of the Thoughts of Man's Heart, is only evil continually, Gen. 6. 5.* It reacheth to all Men, that is the natural Condition of all without Exception. Neither is the Corruption of Nature so abolished, or subdued in Regenerate Men, but that still the Remainders of it are such in the best, as makes them often complain in the Words of the Apostle, *Rom. 7. That in their Flesh there dwelleth no good Thing, and that tho', through the Grace of God, to will be present with them, yet how to perform that which is Good they find not ; That the Good which they would, that they do not, and the Evil which they hate, that they do. v. 18, 19. That tho' they delight in the Law of God after the inward Man, yet they see another Law in their Members, warring against the Law of their Minds, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin. v. 22, 23.*

2. The best Men are not always alike watchful over themselves ; there are certain Seasons when they forget themselves. There was a Time when even the

the wise Virgins *slumbred and slept*, *Mat.* 25. 5. There are certain Seasons when carnal Security creeps on upon them, as it did on *David*, when in his Prosperity he said, he should never be moved, *Pf.* 30. 6. Now how easily may they be overtaken with Sin, with great and foul Sins, when they are in this drowsy, careless, and secure Frame?

3. The Devil oweth good Men a Spite above others, he is always watchful to take Advantages against them, and takes no greater Delight, than in being able to do them a Mischief, by drawing them into Sin. There is an ancient and inveterate Enmity between the Serpent and the Woman, *Gen.* 3. 15. This mortal Enmity, and rank Malignity of the Devil against the Church consider'd, 'tis God's unspeakable Mercy that he doth not God's People, the Best of them, a great deal more Mischief than he doth; that he doth not much oftner, either slyly seduce them, or violently hurry them into many shameful and enormous Sins. He would certainly do it, if God did not, in an extraordinary Manner, restrain his Malice, and strengthen them to resist his Temptations.

4. God

4. God sometimes for righteous, wise, and gracious Ends, is pleased to withdraw from his Servants, and leave them to themselves, as here he dealt with *Hezekiah*, and then it quickly appears how weak and frail they are, and how unable in their own Strength, either to suppress their Corruptions, or to withstand their Temptations. What are the best Men, without the continual and powerful Aids and Assistances of divine Grace?

Now if you enquire why these Spots and Blemishes, and sometimes foul Mis-carriages of God's People are recorded, and transmitted to Posterity, whereas they might have been past by in silence, and concealed; I answer,

1. That such Instances of human Frailty, might be Cautions and Warnings to others; that they might be as Sea-marks, to keep Men from running upon the same Shelves and Rocks, at which others have been in Danger of being Shipwrack'd. The Apostle, having mentioned the Provocations of God's ancient People the *Jews*, and the heavy Judgments which they brought upon them, saith, *All these Things happened unto them for Ensamples, and are written for*

for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come, 1 Cor. 10. 11.

Their Falls, as well as their Sufferings, are written for our Admonition. Their Miscarriages admonish us of our own Frailty, and call upon us to be humble and watchful. So again the Apostle, having discoursed of the Rejection of the *Jews* for their Unbelief, saith to the believing *Gentile*, *For Unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith; be not high-minded but fear, Rom. 11. 20.*

2. These Blemishes and Miscarriages of good Men, are recorded for the Support and Comfort of those sincere and sound Christians, that have fallen through Weakness, and to keep them from Despair. When good Men have been foully and shamefully overtaken, they are oftentimes apt to call in question their spiritual Estate, and to think their Offences to be inconsistent with the State of Grace, and that no Child of God ever sinned as they have done. But then looking into the Sanctuary, and consulting the Word, they find many Examples, even of good Men, whose Conversations, tho' generally unblamable, have sometimes been sullied and stained with the like Blemishes
and

and Deformities. Now they perceive, that tho' they have Cause to be greatly humbled, ashamed, and confounded for their Provocations, yet they are not such as mark them out for those that belong not to Christ, and demonstrate them to be still under Wrath, *in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity.* They take notice that some of God's Children have fallen into the same, or the like Sins, and this is some Relief and Support to their fainting and staggering Souls. If such Instances of the Mis-carriages of some of God's Children had not been left upon Record, many a distressed Soul, heavy laden, and bowed down under the Weight of its Sins, might have been swallowed up with Despair.

3. These dangerous and shameful Falls of good Men, are recorded to make the strongest distrustful of themselves, and to take them off from relying on their own Strength. The Voice and Language of the Falls of *Noah*, and *Lot*, and *Hezekiah*, and *David*, and *Peter*, what is it else, but that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 10. 12. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

4. The

4. The shameful Falls of some good Men, and eminent Servants of God are recorded, to magnify and exalt the rich Mercy, and free Grace of God towards those his Servants.

1. Still owning them for his, notwithstanding their Miscarriages, and not disclaiming them, or casting them off.

2. Still using them and employing them, and not taking Occasion from their Miscarriages to lay them aside.

3. Accepting and Rewarding their Services, as if they had been performed by those, who had never done so much to render their Persons and Performances unacceptable to him, yea, loathsome in the pure Eyes of his Glory. I say, the recording of their shameful Falls and great Miscarriages doth much illustrate, exalt and magnify the rich Mercy, and free Grace of God towards them, in still owning them, employing them, and Accepting and Rewarding their Services, notwithstanding those their Miscarriages.

4. The shameful Falls of good Men and eminent Servants of God, are recorded in the holy Scriptures, to commend and set forth the Power, the free Grace,
and

and admirable Goodness of God, to many weak ones that stand, when they that seem to be, and really are much stronger, fell. The Power and Goodness of God to weak ones in upholding them, would not so much appear, would not so conspicuously and gloriously shine forth, if there were not Instances of the shameful Falls of strong ones, when God leaves them to themselves. When Giants fall, and little Children are upheld, who can chuse but acknowledge the great Power, and free Goodness of God therein?

And thus you have had some of the Reasons of this Dispensation, or the Ends and Designs of God, in causing the shameful Falls and Miscarriages of his Children, to be recorded and transmitted to Posterity; I now come to apply what hath been spoken concerning this Observation.

If the best of Men, and some of the most eminent Servants of God, have not been free from some great Miscarriages,

1. Let us hence learn not to be too rigid or severe, too harsh or peremptory in censuring Men for their Failings, or sometimes perhaps their gross Miscarriages, I mean in censuring them, as to their
their

their spiritual Estate. Dislike and abhor their Sins we may, and must, and declare our Abhorrence and Detestation of them upon all just Occasions, but judge their Persons and Estates merely upon that Account, we must not. Unless a Man were the Searcher of the Heart, which is God's sole prerogative, 'tis a hard Thing to say, such a Man hath done so and so, therefore he is an Hypocrite, or a mere Dissembler; or a Person utterly void of any true Grace. Upon as good Grounds a Man might have passed the like Censure upon *Noah*, and *Lot*, and *David*, and *Peter*, and other good Men, whose shameful Falls are mentioned in Scripture. So long as the common Course of Men's Lives is agreeable to the Rule of the Gospel, so long as the general Tenor of their Conversation is Spotless and Unblameable, we must not be so critical and severe, as for some particular Blemishes to brand them for Persons Unsound and Rotten at Heart, and presently to blot their Names out of the Catalogue of the Faithful. And if their Failings should be such, and so many, as there may be cause of Questioning their spiritual Condition, yet even in this Case

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Charity must dispose and incline us to hope the best ; and if we should be deceiv'd, yet 'tis much better to err Charitably than Uncharitably.

2. Seeing good Men, and Persons of eminent Holiness, have sometimes fallen dangerously and shamefully, let none presume upon their own Strength. What measures of Grace and spiritual Strength soever they have attain'd, let them walk humbly with God, and live dependently on him. Let them ever go out of themselves, and betake themselves to God for Ability to resist all Temptations, and perform all Duties. This is that which the Apostle exhorts us to, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, Eph. 6. 10.* So long as we thus disclaim and renounce our Abilities, and rely on God for Strength, we are safe ; but when we begin to forget God, and rely on our Strength, then are we presently in Danger of Falling.

3. Let such as stand, especially when assaulted with Temptations, and when others better and stronger than themselves have fallen, acknowledge God therein, be truly thankful to him, and give him all the Glory of their standing. Thus did the Psalmist ; *Thou upholdest
me*

me in mine Integrity, saith he unto God, *Pf. 41. 12. And again, When I said my Foot slippeth, thy Mercy, O Lord, held me up. Pf. 94. 18.* They who thus acknowledge God in their being upheld, and kept from Falling, do as it were engage him still to uphold them ; but when Men ascribe their Supports and Preservation to themselves, and make account they stand by their own Strength, and that they are beholding to none but themselves for it, then they take the ready Course to be left to themselves, that by falling they may be sensible of their Weakness, and come to understand where their Strength lies ; that finding they cannot stand longer than God's Almighty Arm supports them, they may for the future both rely on him alone, and give unto him all the Praise that is due to his Name for upholding them.

And now I should have dismiss'd this Point, but that 'tis requisite a few Words should be added by Way of Caution, to prevent the abuse of what hath been spoken. Such is the Corruption of Man's Nature, that we may justly fear there may be some who may take an occasion of encouraging themselves in Sin, and

of hardening their Hearts more in their evil Ways, from the Examples of the Falls and Miscarriages of those good Men, whose Failings are mentioned in the holy Scriptures. There are principally Three Ways, by which wicked Men may abuse the forementioned Instances of human Frailty.

1. By emboldening themselves to the Commission of any Sin, because they read in Scripture, that some good Men, and eminent Servants of God, have been overtaken with the same, or the like Sins.

2. By justifying themselves after the Commission of Sin, because they have done no worse, than such or such good Men have done before them.

3. By being upon the same Account, the less solicitous about making their Peace with God, and seeking after the Pardon of their Sins. If there should be any here present so desperately wicked, as to make these Uses of the Falls of God's People, I shall recommend these Things to their serious Consideration.

1. That to make such use of the Falls of good Men recorded in Scripture, is to defeat the very End for which they are recorded, which is to be Warnings
and

and Cautions to others, and to keep them from Sin, and not to embolden them to the Commission of it, or to harden them in it.

2. That the holy Scriptures mentioning the Falls of good Men, do also frequently make mention of their Humiliation and Repentance; as also of the Anger and Displeasure of God against them for their Sins, and of the great Severity he hath shewed against his own Children, when by their Sins they have provok'd him. He therefore who shall diligently peruse the holy Scriptures, where such Miscarriages of God's People are reported, shall find little to encourage him to do as they have done, unless the high Displeasure of God against them, for such their Sins, the severe Chastisements, and sometimes the dreadful Evils inflicted on them for their Sins, the wounding of their Consciences, the Loss of the Sense of God's Love, the terrible Apprehensions of his Wrath, due to them for their Sins, may be thought to be Encouragements to them to continue in their Sin.

3. That tho' in some Places of Scripture, there may be mention made of the Sins of good Men, where no men-

tion is made of God's Displeasure against them, or of any Punishments inflicted on them for those Sins; yet in many other Places of Scripture, the Evil and Danger of those Sins is sufficiently laid open and represented to us, by the Threatenings denounc'd against such as commit them, by the Punishments laid on Men for them, and by the fearful Consequents of such Sins both here and hereafter, in this present World, and in that which is to come. For Instance, tho' where *Noah's* Drunkenness is mentioned, there be nothing said of God's Displeasure against him, or of any Punishment inflicted on him for it; yet how many other Passages of holy Scripture are there, by which it appears how highly God is provok'd by that Sin, and how many fearful Judgments it brings upon particular Persons, and Places! So tho' where *Lot's* Incest is mentioned there be no mention made of God's Anger and Displeasure, incurred by it, yet afterwards in the Sequel of that History we find, that from those incestuous Births, sprang the cursed Nations of the *Amonites* and *Moabites*, by which the high Provocation, which there was in that Sin, is abundantly demonstrated.

Besides,

Besides, we are inform'd from other Scriptures, and those not a few, how terribly God threatens, and how severely he punisheth all Manner of Uncleaness, among which that of Incest is not the least: Other Instances of like Nature I might produce, but I pass them by.

4. Consider that the Falls of good Men recorded in Scripture, were not common and ordinary Things with them; they were but very rarely so overtaken. As for most of the Miscarriages before-mentioned, we do not find in Scripture that the Persons offending were above once overtaken in that kind. And therefore how dare any of us plead the Examples of the sad Falls of any of God's Children once so offending, to justify and encourage our selves in the constant and allowed Practice of any Sin? If *Noah* were once overtaken with Drunkenness, what is there in this to encourage any Man in a constant Course of Intemperance, and Excess in Drinking, to the Prejudice of Health, the Loss of much precious Time, and the Drawing him into many other Sins and Inconveniencies, attending that sinful Practice? What is there in the foul Sin

of *Lot*, or *David* once committed, and against which the high Displeasure of God, was in so signal a Manner, declared and manifested, to justify any Man in a constant Course of all Manner of abominable Filthiness and Uncleaness? If *Moses*, by the Provocations of a perverse People, was once so transported that he *spake unadvisedly with his Lips*, for which he was denied the Favour of entring into the Land of *Canaan*, the Thing which (no doubt) of all earthly Things he most desired, what is there in this, to justify any Man in the constant Abuse of his Tongue, by all Manner of intemperate and bitter Language, as if he had dip'd it in Gall, and the *Poison of Asps were under his Lips*? If *Hezekiah* were once, and for ought we know, but once overtaken with boasting and a vain-glorious Ostentation of his Riches, Treasures, and precious Things, for which he was presently threatened, by the Prophet *Isaiah*, that the Time should come when all those Things of which he boasted, should be carried into *Babylon*, what was there in all this to justify and encourage any Man in a constant Practice of vain Boasting and Ostentation, as often as any the least
Occasion

Occasion is offered? To conclude, and shut up this Point, it concerns us all to put a great Difference between the occasional Slips, and particular Falls of good Men in Scripture, which they were very rarely, perhaps but once overtaken with, and the constant Practice, or frequent allowed Commission of any Sin. For this is that, which according to the Judgment of all sound Divines, is absolutely inconsistent with the State of Grace. Wherefore *David* concluded that he should not be confounded, upon no other Premises, but because he had respect to all God's Commandments, *Pf. 119. 6.* Had he allowed himself in the Breach of any one Commandment, he could not have made such a Conclusion. As for such as allow themselves in the Practice of any Sin, they are those *Workers of Iniquity* which Christ saith, he will never own for his, *Matth. 7. 23.* These are they, who, in St. *John's* Phrase commit Sin; *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil, 1 John 3. 8.* And on the other Side, *He that is born of God doth not commit Sin, v. 9.* that is, doth not allow himself in the Practice of it, for that is the Signification and Importance of that Phrase with St. *John.* So then
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as you desire to satisfy your self, that you are not of the Devil, that you are not still one of his Vassals, and one that belongs to his Kingdom ; as you desire to satisfy your self, that you are born of God, that you are truly regenerated in the State of Grace, and not under the Wrath of God ; so it concerns you to see that you allow not your self in any known Sin, but that with *David*, *Pf. 119. 104.* you *hate*, and consequently forsake, and utterly renounce and abandon *every false Way*. This, and this alone will be a sufficient Evidence of the Soundness of your spiritual Estate.

So I pass on to another Observation. *In the Business of the Embassadors of the Princes of Babylon, God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart ;* that is, God left him to himself that the Pride of his Heart might be discovered. Hence we may in the second Place observe,

2. That Men do not fall into Sin without the most wise and holy Providence of God. I say,

1. Men do not fall into Sin without the most wise Providence of God : for such is the Wisdom of God, that he would never permit Sin to be, unless he
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knew how to make advantage of it for his own Glory, and intended so to do.

2. I say, Man falls not into Sin without his most holy Providence, because whatever Providence God exerciseth about Sin, or in relation to Sin, is no other than what is most agreeable to his Holiness, neither making him the Author or Cause of Sin, nor the Encourager or Abettor thereof. This were most horrible Blasphemy to affirm concerning him. If he were so, *how could he judge the World?* as the Apostle saith, *Rom. 3. 6.* How could he justly punish wicked Men, adjudging them to everlasting Torments for their Sins?

Now that Men do not fall into Sin without the most wise and holy Providence of God, is evident,

1. Because nothing comes to pass beside, or without his Providence. *The Lot is cast into the Lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord, Prov. 16. 33.* This our Saviour hath taught us, *Matth. 10. 29, 30.* where he saith, that *a Sparrow falls not on the Ground without our heavenly Father, and that the Hairs of a Man's Head are all number'd.* Now if so small a Thing as the Lighting of a Sparrow on the Ground, or the Falling of one Hair

Hair from a Man's Head, be not without the Providence of God, how can it be conceived that Sin should be without his Providence. Sin, I say, which some Way or other acteth, and hath an Hand in all the most considerable Affairs and Transactions, Changes and Alterations, Turns and Revolutions of the World? To say that God's Providence extendeth not to the Sins of Men, and that 'tis no Way exercised about them, were in effect to discharge God of the Government of the World. But however in this Matter great Care must be taken, that we go in the middle and safe Way, neither ascribing too much, nor too little unto the Providence of God, with reference unto Sin. We must be sure that on the one Hand, we ascribe not so much unto his Providence about Sin, as to make him the Author of it, nor on the other Hand, so little as to set God aside, and leave the World to its own Conduct and Government.

2. That Men fall not into Sin without God's Providence, is evident, because if he had been so pleased, Sin had never entred into the World; for that he could have hindred it, no Man can deny, who acknowledgeth his Omnipotency.

tency. So likewise there is no particular Sin that any Man commits, now since the Fall of *Adam*, but God could with-hold him from it; there is no Temptation which he meets with, but he is able to strengthen him against it. This is clearer than that it needs any Confirmation. He must rob and divest God of his Almightyness, that will deny it.

3. The holy Scriptures frequently and expressly take notice of, and point out unto us, the Providence of God in the Sins of Men. When *Joseph's* Brethren had wickedly sold him to the *Midianites*, who afterwards carried him to *Egypt*, *Joseph* comforts them by the Providence of God therein, saying, *I am Joseph your Brother, whom ye sold into Egypt; now therefore be not ye grieved, nor angry with your selves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve Life, Gen. 45. 4, 5.* And yet again more fully and emphatically in the seventh and eighth Verses, *God sent me before you to preserve you a Posterity in the Earth, and to save your Lives by a great Deliverance, so now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.* So tho' the Revolt of the Ten Tribes from *Rehoboam* was a great Sin in them, yet when

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when *Rehoboam* had raised an Army to reduce them to their Obedience, they are forbidden to go on in that enterprize, by the Prophet *Shemaiah*, saying, *Thus saith the Lord, ye shall not go up, nor fight against your Brethren the Children of Israel; return every Man to his House, for this Thing is from me, 1 Kings 12. 24.*

In like Manner when *Abimelech*, and the Men of *Shechem* fell out, and they dealt falsely and perfidiously with him, 'tis said, that God sent an evil Spirit between *Abimelech* and the Men of *Shechem*, and the Men of *Shechem* dealt treacherously with *Abimelech*; *Judg. 9. 23.* But more particularly the Scriptures inform us, how the Providence of God is several Ways exercised about the Sins of Men. As

1. That God decrees to permit Sin. The crucifying of Christ was the most horrid Sin that ever was committed, and yet had not this Sin ever been committed, unless God had from Eternity decreed to permit it. For without God's Permission nothing comes to pass; and what he permits in Time, that he from Eternity decreed to permit. Thus *St. Peter*, discoursing of the Crucifying of Christ, saith to the wicked Jews, *Him being deliver'd by the determinate Counsel*
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and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and slain, Acts 2. 23. To the same Purpose it is that the Church, speaking unto God in Prayer, saith, *of a Truth, against thy holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the People of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done, Acts 4. 27. 28.* Thus we see that the very crucifying of Christ, is said to have been according to the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God; that both the *Gentiles* and the *Jews* in that horrid Action, did whatsoever the Hand and Counsel of God had determined to be done; all which can amount to no less than an eternal Decree to permit it to be done. Neither is God hereby in the least disparag'd, or his Holiness blemish'd. He is not bound to hinder Sin, as we are, so far as we are able. If he were under the same Obligation to hinder Sin to the utmost of his Power, Sin had never been. That he permitted Sin when he might have hinder'd it, is an irrefragable Demonstration that he is not obliged to hinder it as we are.

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2. God by his Providence so disposeth of Things, as that Men often meet with that which proves Matter of Temptation to them, by which, through the Corruption of their own Hearts, they are drawn into Sin. It was by the Providence of God, that the *Babylonish* Garment, the Two Hundred Shekels of Silver, and the Wedge of Gold, lay where *Achan*, casting his Eye upon them, coveted them, and stole them, *Josb. 7. 21.* It was by God's Providence that *Joseph's* Mistress found him alone, none else being at that Time in the House with him, by which she had an Opportunity of Tempting him to commit Lewdness with her, *Gen. 39. 11, 12.* When God thus by his Providence so disposeth of Things, as that Men meet with that whereby they are drawn into Sin, he is said to *lay a stumbling Block before them*, *Ezek. 3. 20.* that is, to lay Things in their Way, at which they will stumble; to lay such Things before them, as through the Wickedness of their Hearts, prove an Occasion of stumbling to them. But since the Providence of God only lays such Things before them, that they stumble at them, and from them take occasion of Sinning,
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the Sin is not to be attributed to the Providence of God, but to the Corruption of our own Hearts. Were it not for our Corruption within, these outward Things would never be an Occasion of Sin to us.

3. God sometimes permits Satan to tempt Men to Sin. That he doth tempt Men we are sure of, we find it by woful Experience ; and we are as sure that he cannot do it without God's Permission. We read in the 2 Sam. 24. 1. that *the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, go, number Israel and Judah.* But it was *David's Sin* that he caused the People to be number'd ; how then is it said, that God moved *David* to say, go number *Israel* and *Judah* ? Surely not by instigating or thrusting him on thereunto ; not by any inward Motion or Impulse from himself, nor by infusing into his Heart any ill Quality, or bad Principle, disposing or inclining him thereunto ; but by permitting *Satan* to move him to cause his People to be number'd. This is evident from what we read, in the 1 Chron. 21. 1. Where 'tis said, that *Satan* stood up against *Israel*, and provok'd *David* to number *Israel*. Thus

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was *Satan* permitted to tempt *Simon Peter*, whereof our Saviour forewarned him, saying, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desir'd to have you, that he may sift you as Wheat, Luke 22. 31.* When he tempts Men, he is said to sift them, because he shakes, disquiets, unsettles and disturbs them by his Temptations. This he never doth, nor can do, but by God's Permission; and therefore Christ saith, *Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as Wheat*; thereby implying that he must ask leave, and obtain it also, before he can tempt any Man. But here when 'tis usually said, that God permits *Satan*, and gives him leave to tempt, we must take heed that we do not so understand it, as if *Satan* had thereby such a Power or Commission given him to tempt, as that now he might do it by Authority, and not offend in so doing: No such Matter, tho' *Satan* be permitted, and have leave to tempt, this signifies no more than only this, that God doth not interpose to hinder him, or restrain him from tempting, but lets him alone to act according to the Bent of his wicked and malicious Nature.

4. God sometimes withdraws from his People those Assistances of his Spirit and Grace, which at other Times he affords them, but is not oblig'd to give them. He for the present, in great Measure leaves them to themselves, as he did to *Hezekiah* here in the Text. So God is said to have given up his People unto their own Hearts Lusts, *Pf. 81. 12.* Thus he sometime said concerning *Ephraim*, *He is join'd to Idols, let him alone, Hos. 4. 8.* God would not effectually take them off from their Idols, as he could have done, but leaves them to themselves to do as they think fit.

5. God fixeth Limits, and sets Bounds to the Sins of Men, and restrains their Corruptions, saying to them as to the Waves of the Sea, *hitherto shall ye come, and no farther.* So he withheld *Abimelech* from sinning against him, *Gen. 20. 6.* God's setting Bounds to the Sins of Men, the Psalmist hath fully expressed, *Pf. 76. 10.* where speaking unto God he saith, *The Wrath of Man shall praise thee, and the Remainder of it shalt thou restrain.* The meaning of which Words is this, that God suffers the Fury, Rage, and Malice of ungodly Men, against his Church, so far to break forth and

proceed, as may conduce to his own Glory in the End, but further it shall not go, the Remainder of it he will quell and suppress. And as he thus sets Bounds to the Sins of Men, and restrains the Instruments of *Satan*, so doth he also limit and restrain *Satan* himself. We have an Instance thereof, *Job. 2. 6.* where he tells *Satan* that *Job* is in his Hand, he may deal with him as he pleaseth otherwise, only he must save his Life. How grievously soever he did afflict his Body, he must not kill him, that was beyond his Commission.

6. God over-rules, governs, and directs the Sins of Men, so as that they serve to the Advancing of his own Glory, and to the Furthering of his most wise, just, holy and gracious Ends. Were it not that God intended to make good Use of the Sins of Men, (as hath been already said) he would never permit Sin to be. The Scriptures speak very fully concerning this Matter. To say nothing of the Use he makes of it in reference to his own Glory, taking occasion from it to glorify his Justice in the everlasting Punishment of Sin, and to exalt his Mercy and free Grace in the Pardon thereof; God makes use of the Sins of Men,

1. To

1. To punish wicked Men here in this World for their Provocations. In the Ninth of *Judges* we read that *Abimelech*, by the Aid and Assistance of the Men of *Shechem*, most cruelly slew all his Brethren, being Threescore and Ten Persons, upon one Stone, *Jotham* only escaping. For the Punishment of which cruel Action they afterwards fell out among themselves, and were the Destruction of one another. And that God thus punished them, the Text expressly affirms, first, v. 23, 24. Where 'tis said, that God sent an evil Spirit between *Abimelech*, and the Men of *Shechem*; and the Men of *Shechem* dealt treacherously with *Abimelech*, that the Cruelty done to the threescore and ten Sons of *Jerubbael*, might be reveng'd, and their Blood be laid upon *Abimelech* their Brother, which slew them, and upon the Men of *Shechem*, which aided him in the killing of his Brethren. Then after the relating of the Destruction of him and them, by their mutual Dissensions, the Spirit of God saith in the Close of the Chapter, repeating it as a Thing most remarkable, *Thus God render'd the Wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his Father in slaying his Seven-*

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ty Brethren, and all the evil of the Men of Shechem, did God render upon their Heads, v. 56, 57. And thus altho' the Assyrians were acted and thrust on to do what they did by Ambition, Covetousness, Revenge, and such like wicked Principles, yet God made use of them to punish others: they were God's Rod, as he speaks, O Assyrian the Rod of mine Anger, and the Staff in their Hand is mine Indignation; I will send him against an hypocritical Nation, and against the People of my Wrath will I give him a Charge to take the Spoil, and to take the Prey, and to tread them down like the Mire of the Street. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his Heart think so, but it is in his Heart to destroy and cut off Nations not a few, Is. 10. 5, 6, 7. So while wicked Men act according to the corrupt Affections, and wicked Principles that are in their Hearts, and while they have no other Designs than to satisfy their Ambition, Covetousness, Revenge, and the like, and to do their own Work, God makes use of them to do his Work in the righteous Punishment of those, who have by their Sins provok'd his Indignation against them. Upon this Account it is that the Psalmist calls wicked Men

Men God's Sword. *Deliver my Soul from the wicked which is thy Sword*, saith he; *Pf. 17. 13.* So God himself calls wicked Men his Battle-Ax, and Weapons of War, *Jer. 51. 20, 21, 22.* Where speaking of the *Babylonian*, as 'tis probable, whom he intended to make use of to punish the neighbouring Nations, he saith, *Thou art my Battle-Ax, and Weapons of War, for with thee will I break in Pieces the Nations, and with thee will I destroy Kingdoms, and with thee will I break in Pieces the Horse and his Rider.*

2. As God makes use of the Sins of Men to punish wicked Men, so doth he also make use of them for the Chastisement and Correction of his People. Thus the Prophet *Habakkuk*, speaking unto God in Prayer concerning the *Chaldeans* saith, *O Lord thou hast ordained them for Judgment, and O mighty God, thou hast establish'd them for Correction, Hab.*

1. 12. Thus God frequently corrected his People for their Sins, by calling in foreign Nations to afflict and chasten them, when they had incurr'd his Displeasure. This is that which he threatens and intends in those metaphorical Expressions, *Is. 7. 18.* where he saith, that he would hiss *for the Fly that is in*

the uttermost Part of the River of Egypt, and for the Bee that is in the Land of Assyria, that is, he would bring in those Nations upon them, which for their Multitudes, and for the Anguish and Vexation they should inflict on his People, should be as swarms of Flies and Bees, to bite and sting them. Thus God, for the Sins of his People, deliver'd them into the Hand of Chusban-Rishathaim King of Mesopotamia, Judg. 3. 7, 8. and into the Hand of Eglon King of Moab v. 12. and into the Hand of Jaban King of Canaan, Judg. 4. 1, 2. and into the Hand of the Midianites, Judg. 6. 1, 2. Thus the Lord chastened David by the Rebellion of his wicked Son Absalom, 2 Sam. 15. 16. as also by the Insurrection of Sheba, Chap. 20. and by that of Adonijah, 1 Kings 1. 5, 6. and this according to the threatening denounc'd against him by the Prophet Nathan for his Sins, in the Matters of Bathshebah and Uriah, That the Sword should never depart from his House, 2 Sam. 12. 10.

3. As God makes use of the Sins of Men to punish wicked Men, and to chasten his People, so in the same Persons he sometimes punisheth and correcteth one Sin with another. Thus he threat-

threaten'd the *Israelites*, that if they should in after times corrupt themselves, and make a graven Image of the Likeness of any Thing, and do evil in the Sight of the Lord their God, to provoke him to anger, he would then scatter them among the Nations, and they should be left few in Number among the Heathen; and that there they should serve Gods, the Work of Men's Hands, Wood and Stone, which neither see nor hear, nor eat nor smell, Deut. 4. 25, 27, 28. So then their serving Wood and Stone in the Land of their Enemies, among whom they should be scattered, should be a Punishment of their Sins, formerly committed in their own Land. Agreeable hereunto is that Account which we have of their Sins, and of God's dealing with them for their Sins, Ezek. 20. 23, 24, 25, 26. They had not executed God's Judgments, but had despised his Statutes, and had polluted his Sabbaths, and their Eyes were after their Fathers Idols. Wherefore, saith God, I gave them Statutes that were not Good, and Judgments whereby they should not live: and I polluted them in their own Gifts, in that they caused to pass through the Fire all that openeth the Womb. The meaning of these Words, according to the

the best and soundest Interpretation is this, That for their former Sins, God gave them up to most abominable Idolatry. Because they executed not God's Judgments, but despised his Statutes, and polluted his Sabbaths, and their Eyes were after their Father's Idols; therefore God gave them Statutes that were not good, and Judgments whereby they should not live, that is, he gave them up to embrace and addict themselves to such idolatrous Ways, Precepts, and Rules of Worship, as were not good, that is, as were most wicked and abominable in themselves, and in the Sight of God; and whereby they should not live, that is, as tended to their Destruction; such as were those Statutes of *Omri*, mention'd by the Prophet, *Mich. 6. 16.* Then it follows, and I polluted them in their holy Gifts, that is, for their other Sins, I suffered them or gave them up to pollute themselves, by suffering their First-born, that should have been consecrated to me, to pass through the Fire as sacrificed to their Idol Gods. Besides these, divers other Instances there are of God's punishing one Sin with another in the same Persons. When his People would not hearken

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en to his Voice, when *Israel* would have none of him, he gave them up unto their own Hearts Lust, and they walk'd in their own Counsels, *Pf. 81. 11, 12.* Because the Gentiles that knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, &c. Therefore he gave them up to Uncleanness, to dishonour their own Bodies between themselves, thro' the Lusts of their own Hearts, *Rom. 1. 21. 24.* Because they chang'd the Truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever; for this Cause God gave them up unto vile Affections, *v. 26.* Again, as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate Mind, to do those Things which are not convenient, being filled with all Unrighteousness, &c. *v. 28, 29.* Because the Anti-christian Party received not the Love of the Truth, therefore God threatens to send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie, *2 Thess. 2. 10, 11.* Thus we have seen that Men do not fall into Sin without God's Providence. We have also seen how many Ways God's Providence is conversant about the Sins of Men. Now the Uses of this Point

Point are divers. This may teach us to look unto God, and take notice of his Providence, both in the Sins of other Men, and in our own Sins.

1. It may teach us to look unto God, and take notice of his Providence in the Sins of other Men, those their Sins, I mean, by which we suffer, and are injured. Do they blast your good Name, and impair your Reputation, by contumelious and defamatory Language? Do they backbite and slander you? Do they most uncharitably and bitterly rail at you, and revile you? In all this look unto God, thro' whose Permission it is that they thus let loose their Tongues against you. Thus *David* looked unto God when *Shimei* cursed him, saying, Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse *David*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. which Words must be understood of God's permitting him to curse, and of his ordering that cursing so permitted, to be either for the Trial, or for the Chastisement of his Servant: Again, do Men deal injuriously with you? Do they wrong you in your Estate, by Extortion or Oppression, by Couzening or Cheating, by Theft or Robbery, or any other unjust Practice? Do they offer
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any Violence to your Person? Do they plot, contrive, or act any Thing against your Life? In all these Cases also look unto God, and acknowledge his most wise and righteous Providence, without which nothing befalls us. Thus *Job* look'd unto God when the *Sabeans* had taken away his Oxen and Asses, and when the *Chaldeans* had taken away his Camels, when these Enemies had not only taken away his Substance, but slain his Servants: *The Lord gave, saith he, and the Lord hath taken away, Job. 1. 21.* So when *David's* Enemies had compassed him about, and were ready to fall upon him and destroy him, *like as a Lion that is greedy of his Prey, and as it were a young Lion lurking in secret Places,* as he himself describes his Danger; he applies himself to God, whose Instruments he acknowledgeth those wicked Men to have been, saying, *Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, and cast him down, deliver my Soul from the wicked which is thy Sword, from Men which are thy Hand, Ps. 17. 13, 14.* So when the Prophet *Habakkuk* had been speaking of the Miseries, that should come upon the People of God by the Tyranny and Cruelty of the *Chaldeans*, he looked unto God, and acknowledged him in
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all the Sufferings of his Church from those barbarous Enemies, saying, *O Lord thou hast ordain'd them for Judgment, and O mighty God thou hast establish'd them for Correction, Hab. 1. 12.* Now a double Benefit would accrue to us, by this our looking unto God, and acknowledging him in whatsoever we suffer from Men. It would both make us more patient under our Sufferings whatsoever they are; and it would help us to improve our Afflictions, and to profit by them.

I. Our looking unto God, and acknowledging his most wise and righteous Providence, in what we suffer from wicked Men, would make us more patient under our Sufferings. This was that which made both *David* and *Job* so Patient when injur'd by wicked Men, they looked more unto God than unto the Instruments of their Sufferings. And when God is thus observed, and his Providence acknowledged in our Sufferings from evil Men, there are several Things which will offer themselves to our Consideration, that will be of great Force and Efficacy, for the Quieting our Minds, and composing our Spirits; for keeping down and suppressing all the impatient Workings of our Hearts, and

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Fermentings of our Corruptions, which the Apprehension and Sense of Injuries done us, are wont to occasion. For

1. If we look unto God in all the Injuries that we receive from Men, we cannot but acknowledge that he is Just in all that comes upon us, how injuriously and despitefully soever Men may deal with us. Their Actions may be most wrongful and malicious, but we are sure God doth us no wrong. Tho' we have deserved no such Measure at the Hands of the Instruments of our Sufferings, yet we have deserved all that comes upon us, and a great deal more, at the Hand of God. He is not only just in laying no more upon us by the Hand of evil Men, than we deserve, but merciful, inflicting much less upon us than our Iniquities deserve. And this is one sovereign Antidote against Impatience. What Shadow of Reason have they to give way to Fretting and Impatience, who are both justly and mercifully treated in their greatest Sufferings, as all must acknowledge they are if they look unto God? But when we look no farther than Men, the Instruments of our Sufferings, when we have nothing else in our Eye, but the Injuries they have done

done us ; when our Thoughts are wholly taken up with the Contemplation of the Malice and Spite that is discovered, as we apprehend, in their Carriage toward us ; this makes us disquiet, and vex, and afflict, and even torment our selves. This bereaves us of all our Patience, and transports us beyond all Bounds of Moderation. Thus it is with us, and thus it will be with us, until we can so far recover our selves, as to take off our Eyes from the Creature, and fix them upon God.

2. When we look to God in what we suffer from Men, the Consideration of his Sovereignty, of the absolute Power and Dominion which he hath over us, will not a little conduce to the quieting of our Spirits, and the subduing of our Hearts to a patient undergoing of whatsoever comes upon us, by what Instruments soever. Such is God's uncontrollable Power and Dominion over us as his Creatures, that he may exercise our Patience, or correct and punish us for our Sins, by what Instruments he pleaseth, and in what Manner and Measure he pleaseth. We are in his Hand as the Clay in the Hand of the Potter, *Jer. 18. 6.* we are absolutely at his Disposal,

posal, and must be so whether we will or no. And 'tis not an usurped Power, that he exerciseth over us, but a just and rightful Dominion. What higher Right can there be to dispose of us, than what he hath, by having given us our Being, and by sustaining and upholding us in it? What are we therefore that our Hearts should rise against any Thing that he doth? or that we should not meekly and patiently submit to all his Providences?

3. Looking unto God in whatsoever we suffer from Men, the Consideration of his Wisdom may help to remove and allay our Impatience. Whether it be his Pleasure to exercise our Faith, Patience, and other Graces, or to chasten us for our Sins, he who is infinitely wise, knows how to make choice of the fittest Instruments, and to pitch upon the fittest Means and Methods for effecting his own Work. Wherefore if we really and heartily subscribe to his Wisdom therein, as there is all the Reason in the World that we should, what remains but that we patiently submit to what he doth, and quietly bear what he inflicts by what Hands or Instruments soever?

4. Looking unto God in whatsoever we suffer from Men, the Consideration

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of his Goodness may also greatly conduce to the Working of our Hearts to that humble, quiet, patient, and submissive Frame which is both most pleasing to God, and most comfortable for us. Men, in what they do against us, may act from Hatred, Spite, Malice, and Revenge; while God permits all this in Love. Men may intend nothing else but your Loss, your Trouble, your Disquiet and Vexation, it may be your Ruin; while God aims at your Good, and if you belong to him, will in the Issue, certainly do you good, even by what is most maliciously and despitefully intended by Men. And it must be granted, that there can be no better Argument, no stronger Inducement to prevail with you to be patient than this.

But you may say, perhaps, in some Cases, what Good can a Man hope for, or expect by his sufferings? Some Wounds may be so deep as that they admit of no Cure. A Man's sufferings may be such as no Reparations can ever be made him. Say you so? what think you then of that Promise, *Rom. 8. 28. That all Things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his Purpose.* We see
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not what Good may redound to us by our Sufferings in this or that Kind; we cannot apprehend how such Things should ever turn to our Advantage. But will we not acknowledge that God sees a great deal farther than we can? Let us not confine his infinite Power and Wisdom, within the narrow Bounds of our finite and shallow Understanding. He is wonderful in Counsel and excellent in Working, *Is. 28. 29.* He can do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think, *Eph. 3. 20.* He can bring Good out of Evil, and Light out of Darkness. He can turn the rankest Poisons into the most sovereign Antidotes. He can make the worst Things most helpful and beneficial to us. He can make the Things that are in themselves, and in their own Nature, most malignant and destructive, to be of the most benign, and friendly Influence, for furthering and procuring our Good, spiritual and temporal.

2. As our looking to God in whatsoever we suffer from Men, would make us more patient under our Sufferings, whatsoever they be, so it would help us to improve our Afflictions, and to profit by them. For when we look to

God, and take notice of his Providence in all that comes upon us from Men, this will lead us to consider what God's Design may be in permitting wicked Men to deal so injuriously with us; this will cause us to make diligent Enquiry after those our Sins, whereby we may have provok'd him thereunto; this will put us upon humbling our selves for our Sins, and making our Peace with God. But while we rest in the Instruments of our Sufferings, and look no farther, instead of searching after our Sins, humbling our selves for them, and reforming what is amiss, we go on to add Sin to Sin, Impatience, Fretting, Passion, Revenge, and what not? So that if we provok'd God before to permit Men to injure us, we now provoke him more, by our sinful Carriage under his afflicting Hand: Thus we see of what Advantage it may be to us, to look unto God, and take notice of his Providence in the Sins of other Men, by which we have been injured.

2. If Men fall not into Sin without God's most wise and holy Providence, this may also teach us to look unto God, and to take notice of his Providence in our own Sins, as well as in the Sins of other
other

other Men. He doth often punish one Sin by another Sin in the same Persons, as hath been shew'd. When Men have by some Sin greatly provok'd God to Anger against them, as a Punishment of that Sin, he leaves them to themselves, and suffers them to run into some other Sin. Several Instances hereof might be given. As

1. Sometimes Men run upon Temptations, that's their Sin, for 'tis every Man's Duty to avoid Temptations as far as he is able. This their Sin of exposing themselves to Temptations, when they might decline them if they would, God punisheth by giving them up to the Power of Temptations, and by suffering them to be overcome by them. So this latter Sin is not only the Fruit and Consequent, but the Punishment of the former.

2. Sometimes Men are not watchful over themselves; they are supine, and careless, they are mindless and regardless of their Hearts and Ways, that's their Sin; and that Sin God chastens them for, by suffering them to fall dangerously and shamefully.

3. Sometimes Men indulge themselves in some secret Sin; tho' the all-

seeing Eye of God be upon them, yet that Eye they stand not in awe of, they regard not; so long as they can hide their Sin from the Eye of the World, they think they are safe enough. But by Way of Punishment of this their secret Sin, God some time or other suffers them to fall into some open Sin in the same Kind, that exposeth them to publick Shame and Reproach.

4. Sometimes Men are full of presumptuous Confidence in their own Strength, as it was with *Peter*, and then God suffers them to fall grievously, thereby both to chasten them for their Self-confidence, and to make them sensible of their Weakness.

5. Sometimes Men will not hearken to good Counsel and Advice; they obstinately reject it, and harden their Hearts against it; and by way of Punishment thereof, God gives them up unto their own Hearts Lust, and they walk in their own Counsels, as he dealt with the *Israelites* for the like Sin, *Pf. 81. 12.* He suffers them to run into those Sins, and thereby to bring those Miseries and Calamities upon themselves, which, if they would have lent a teachable and obedient Ear to good Counsel,

Counsel, might easily have been prevented. By what hath been said we may perceive how much it concerns us to look unto God, and to take notice of his Providence in our own Sins, as well as in the Sins of other Men. The Advantages of our looking to God herein are divers.

1. It will oftentimes bring us to the Sight of those our former Sins, whereby God hath been provok'd to leave us to ourselves, and to suffer us to run into greater, into more dangerous and shameful Sins.

2. It will greatly further our Humiliation, when we shall plainly discern that our after-sins are but the Fruit, and deserved Punishment of former Crimes ; and that it was most just with God, after we had first forsaken him, to forsake us in some Measure, by giving us up to greater Sins, and to a further Degree of Alienation and Estrangement from him.

3. It would make us more watchful over our selves, over our Hearts, Words, and Ways ; it would make us more careful to avoid Sin, and Temptations, as much as in us lies ; and to resist Temptations when we cannot avoid them ; lest for our Carelessness and Negligence ;

for our running upon Temptations, or venturing on Sin, we should provoke God to leave us yet further to our selves, and to suffer us to fall yet more shamefully and dangerously ; it being an ordinary Course of his most wise and righteous Providence, to punish one Sin by leaving Men to themselves, to fall into another. These are the proper Uses of this Doctrine. There are also some Abuses of it, which I shall briefly touch upon to caution us against, and prevent them.

1. It would be a most wicked and horrid Abuse of this Truth, if any Man should hence infer, that God is the Author of Sin. I have shew'd before, that tho' no Man falls into Sin, without God's most wise and holy Providence, yet God neither thrusts any Man on to Sin, nor infuseth into his Heart any Malice, or sinful Disposition, whereby he is inclined to evil. All Men's vicious Inclinations, all their Propensions to Evil, are from the Devil and themselves ; as for God, he *made Man upright, Eccles. 7. 29. he created him, after his own Image, in Righteousness and true Holiness, Eph. 4. 24.* It were most detestable and horrid Blasphemy, to charge Man's Sin upon

upon God, as the Author of it ; as if he who first stamp'd his own Image upon his Creature, should afterwards rase it out again, and imprint the Image of the Devil instead of it. 'Tis true, nothing comes to pass without the Providence of God, and Sin could never have enter'd into the World without God's Permission. But 'tis one Thing for him to permit Sin, who is not bound to hinder it ; 'tis another Thing to be the Cause or Author of it. Can he that strictly forbids Sin, that terribly threatens it, that most dreadfully and everlastingly punisheth it, be conceived to be the Author of it? This were to charge him, who is infinitely just and righteous, with the highest Injustice imaginable.

2. Another horrible Abuse of this Truth, were hence to infer, that there lies upon Man a fatal Necessity of Sinning. The eternal Decree of God to permit Sin, imposeth no Necessity of Sinning on any Man, but leaves Men as free as if no such decree had ever been. The Import of God's Decree is not to compel or force them to Sin ; no nor so much as to incline or dispose them to it, but to leave them to the Liberty of their own Will, and yet not so neither, but
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that he dissuades from Sin however, by the most powerful and effectual Arguments, and threatens Men with the most dreadful Evils ; by Sin they abuse that Liberty of Will which he hath endow'd them with. And if after all this, Men will abuse their Liberty, if they will sin, whatever comes of it, what can be more clear, than that they sin most freely and voluntarily, and that the Destruction that attends their Sin, impenitently continued in, is of themselves, as God himself declares, *Hos. 13. 9.*

X 3. Another horrible Abuse of this Truth were, if any Man should therefore think there is less evil in Sin, and be the less troubled at Sin, and humbled for it, when he hath fallen into it ; or apprehend himself less concern'd to seek the Pardon of it, because God takes occasion from it of advancing his own Glory, and because he makes use of it for the Punishment of his Enemies, and for the Chastisement of his People. 'Tis indeed that which signally illustrates and displays the Glory of the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of God, that he makes this Use and Advantage of Sin ; but it doth not in the least abate or lessen the Evil of it ; as Poison is not the less malig-

malignant and hurtful in its own Nature, because the Skill of the Physician can so temper, allay, and correct it, as to make of it an Antidote, a wholesome Medicine, or a Cordial. Notwithstanding all the Use which the righteous God makes of the Sins of Men, we know,

1. That Sin is the greatest Evil in the World, and the only Object of God's Hatred. There is nothing in the World that he hates but Sin : And Sin he hates with an immortal and irreconcilable Hatred.

2. That Sin brings upon Men all the doleful Miseries, and dismal Calamities which they are subject to in this World.

3. That without Pardon obtain'd, it plungeth the Sinner into endless and unutterable Misery in the World to come.

4. That the Pardon of Sin, of any one Sin, could not be purchased at any lower Rate, than by the most precious Blood of the eternal Son of God. He that will lay these Things before him, and seriously ponder them, shall find himself concern'd to take to Heart his Sins, to be deeply humbled for them, and with restless Endeavours to seek the Pardon of them. So I have done with that Observation.

S E R M O N

SERMON XII.

2 Chron. xxxii. Ver. 31.

*Howbeit, in the business of the
Embassadors of the Princes
of Babylon, who sent unto
him to enquire of the Wonder
that was done in the Land,
God left him to try him, that
he might know all that was
in his Heart.*

II. **W**Hereas *Hezekiah* presently
falls, and discovers his
Weakness, as soon as God
leaves him, We may in the Third Place
observe,

3. That Man of himself is a weak,
frail, and impotent Creature. I under-
stand it of spiritual Weakness; and I
understand it of all Men without Excep-
tion, even of the best and strongest.

Hezekiah

Hezekiah was no ordinary Person; he was one that had attain'd a great Measure of Grace and spiritual Strength, in comparison of many others; and yet how Frail and Weak did he appear to be, when left to himself! Man, at best, and when he hath attain'd unto the highest Pitch of Grace, that is attainable in this Life, is still but as a little Child, that stands, or takes some Steps, perhaps 'tis upheld and succour'd by the Hand of one that stands by, and looks after it; but let that Hand be removed, and presently it falls. This is the Case of the strongest Christian; let God's Hand, by which he is upheld be taken away, and it will soon appear how unable he is to stand of himself. All the dangerous and shameful Falls of holy Men, recorded in Scripture, are a sufficient Proof of this Point. And if that were not enough to confirm it, the many sad Examples of human Frailty, among the best of Men, that are frequently before our Eyes, and moreover every Man's Experience of his own Weakness, longer than he is supported by an Almighty Hand, are a pregnant Demonstration hereof. Who is there amongst us all, whose Experience of his
own

own Frailty, doth not bear witness to this Truth? Can any true and sound Christian be so blind, so grossly ignorant of, or partial to himself, as not to discern how weak he is if left to himself, how easily overcome and worsted, by every Temptation that he meets with? Yea what sound Christian that hath any good Acquaintance with himself, doth not see, that tho' there should be no Temptation from without to assault him, yet he hath enough within himself to undo him? Who sees not, that sees any Thing relating to his Soul, that there needs nothing else to make a Man miserable, than that he be left to himself? And hence you may learn several useful Lessons. As

1. To be ever distrustful of your self, in respect of your Weakness. A great Thing it is, and a Matter of high Concernment to us, to preserve a constant Sense of our Weakness, and to keep it ever upon our Hearts. In this lies much of our Strength and Safety. But our Opinion of, and Confidence in our own Strength betrays us.

2. Hence you may learn to go out of your self, to be ever looking up unto God, and to be wholly Dependent on him

him for Strength. If you do indeed feel that you have no Strength of your own, what should you do else but betake your self to God for Strength, and have all your Expectation of Strength from him only, as his Expectation was, who was well acquainted with the Life of Faith, *Pf. 62. 5, 6.*

3. Hence you may learn to walk humbly with God,

1. Ever acknowledging all your Strength to be from God, and giving him the Glory of it. And

2. Being always afraid of offending him, lest you should thereby deprive your self of his Presence and Assistance, without which you can do nothing, *Joh. 15. 5.* and who is with us while we

are with him, *2 Chron. 15. 2,* that is, while we walk with him, while we endeavour to obey him, and please him, and no longer.

4. If Man be so weak and frail a Creature, and if this be the Condition of all Men without Exception, of the best and strongest Christians, when God leaves them to themselves, and withdraws from them the Influences and Assistances of his powerful Grace; this may teach us to deal mercifully and compassionately

ly with lapsed Sinners, especially when we may think that we have sufficient Reason to judge them to be sincere and sound Christians in the main, and that they have fallen into Sin thro' pure Infirmary, or thro' sudden and unexpected Surprizal, or thro' the present Force, and impetuous Violence of Temptation. He that hath any true Sense of his own Infirmary, and knows by Experience how weak and frail he hath appear'd to be, when God hath at any Time left him to himself, how can he chuse but think himself obliged to treat others with the same Tenderness and Compassion, with which he would desire to be treated himself upon the like Occasion? This Gentleness and Tenderness in dealing with lapsed Sinners, with such as have been overtaken in a Fault, the Apostle recommends unto us from this very Consideration, from the Sense we have, or should have of our own Frailty, and from the Danger we are in of slipping into the same Sins, with which others have been overtaken. *Restore such an one (saith he) in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted, Gal. 6. 1.* as if he had said, to be surprized and overtaken

in a Fault, is his Turn to Day, and may be thine to Morrow : thou meetest with no Temptations at present, and so thou mayst be too apt to think that thou art strong enough, and that thou art in little Danger of being so overtaken as thy Brother hath been : but thou knowest not how soon thou also mayst be assaulted with such Temptations to Sin, as may discover thy Weakness, and convince thee of thy Frailty. How strong soever for the present thou seem'st to be in thine own Eyes, thou mayst quickly appear to be as weak as he is, whom perhaps in respect of his Infirmities, thou despisest, or whom thou treatest with such Rigor and Severity, as if thou madest sure Account that his Condition should never be thine own.

And so I go on to another Observation. The secret Pride that was in *Hezekiah's* Heart, did not appear till the *Babylonian* Embassadors came unto him, and gave him an Occasion of making a vain Ostentation of himself, of what he had, and of what God had done for him ; and till withal, God left him to himself. There was as much Pride in his Heart before, but it lay hid, and was not discover'd.

And

The Twelfth Sermon.

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And hence we may in the Fourth Place observe, That Corruption sometimes lies hid in the Heart of Man, and is not easily discern'd, till some Occasion of venting it makes discovery of it. Many Instances hereof might be given. I shall name some of many that might be mention'd.

1. Unbelief oft'times lurketh so secretly within a Man, that he himself takes no notice of it, is not aware of it. But when God lets loose Satan upon him, and permits the Enemy of Souls to winnow him, then he quickly finds how weak his Faith is, and how apt he is to question his spiritual Estate, and it may be not only so, but to stagger about the great Truths of the Gospel, the very Fundamentals of Religion. Then he wonders that there should be so much Unbelief in his Heart, and he should not be sensible of it.

2. Another Instance may be, Distrust of God's Providence. When all Things go well with a Man, and when he lives at Ease, and is in a prosperous Condition, he thinks he could trust God in any Condition. He is apt to fancy his Confidence in God to be strong, and his Reliance on him so stedfast, as nothing

that may befall him can shake it. He wonders at others, and censures them not a little for their Distrust of God's Providence. But let the same Person come to be in Adversity, let him be reduced to Want, and be in Straits, and then his Distrust of God's Providence, which before appear'd not, quickly starts up and shews it self. He now finds his Trust in God to be as weak as before he thought it to be strong. Now he that before thought it to be a very easy Thing to Trust in God, is come to be of another Mind, he now judgeth it to be one of the hardest Things in the World to depend on God's Providence, when a Man hath nothing else to depend on : When all outward Means of Support fail, when the Oil in the Cruse, and the Meal in the Barrel are spent, and a Man knows not whence to be supply'd with any more, to depend on God's Providence still, and to do it without Anxiety or Distraction, to do it with Evenness and Composedness of Spirit, with a quiet and secure Recombency on God for Supplies however, tho' a Man know not how, tho' he sees not whence they should come : In this Case, how full of distrustful Fears is a Man's Heart !

Heart! How often doth he say with himself, *What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be cloathed!* With these and the like distracting Thoughts, how is he afflicted continually, and how unable doth he find he is to rid himself of them, and to cast them out of his Mind?

A Third Instance may be in earthly Mindedness. Many a Man may be apt to think that he is very free from that Corruption. The World, and the Things thereof, he so little values or regards, that he is Confident if his Heart be purged from any Corruption, that is it. Alas, these earthly Things, what are they to him? He is above them, he tramples them under his Feet. Thus he pleaseth himself in the good Opinion he hath of himself, and of his being free from any Taint or Tincture of earthly Mindedness, or inordinate Affection to the Things of the World, whatever other Corruptions may be predominant in him. But let some great Loss befall this Man, by which his temporal Estate is much impaired and diminished, and how near doth it go to his Heart! How doth he take on and afflict himself! If he had lost all at once he could not be

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much

much more dejected than he is. Now whence is all this his Trouble and Affliction? Whence is it that he hangs down his Head, and goes so heavily and mournfully under his Cross, but that his Heart was a great deal more glued to the World than he was aware of? There was within him the bitter Root of Earthly-mindedness, and inordinate Affection to the World, which never appear'd till now, that the Providence of God, in the Loss of his Estate, hath discover'd it.

X A Fourth Instance may be in Hatred and Malice. How much of this may there be in the Hearts of those who discern no such Thing, but make Account they are most free from it! They think they have in their Hearts a Kindness for all Men, and that there is no Person in the World whom they wish not well unto, and whose good they do not heartily desire. And yet what Bitterness and rank Malignity of Spirit, do they not frequently discover against some particular Persons, upon all Occasions, and oft-times without any external Occasion at all! What sharp Arrows of cutting Language, and Heart-piercing Words do they not shoot at them, arguing in their
Hearts

Hearts a deeply rooted Ill-will, and almost an irreconcilable Displeasure against them!

In the Fifth Place, another Instance may be in Revenge. This, many a Man may think himself to be as free from, as any Person in the World. The stirrings of this Corruption within his Heart he never observ'd, nor can he apprehend himself to be in the least disposed or inclined unto it. All this, perhaps, may be as long as he meets with no Injuries, as long as Men carry themselves harmlessly and inoffensively towards him, as long as he is treated kindly and amicably by all those with whom he hath to do. But let this Man be despitefully and injuriously dealt with, by those of whom he hath best deserved: Let them Backbite him, and Slander him, cast all manner of Dirt in his Face, blast his good Name and Reputation, load him with all the false Reports they can raise, bespatter him with all the unjust Reproaches and Calumnies they can invent; let him be thus treated, and ungratefully requited, even by them whom he hath most obliged, and now how will his Heart rise against them! How will Revenge even boil up within him!

him ! Tho' he be one that would suppress and keep under this boisterous and head-strong Corruption, yet how doth it many Times over-power him, and transport him beyond himself ! How doth he long to take hold of an Opportunity of being even with him that hath so injuriously handled him ! And yet this is the Man, that before he was thus injured, thought there had been nothing but Love, and Kindness, and Good-will dwelling in his Breast ; that nothing of the fierce and black Passion of Revenge could be found in his Heart.

X The Sixth and Last Instance shall be in carnal Fear. 'Tis possible that a Man may think himself above this base and cowardly Passion, as long as he converseth with his Equals and Inferiours. He finds while he is amongst these, that he can undauntedly reprove Sin, and boldly oppose it, and courageously declare and manifest his Dislike of whatever Evil he observeth in them. Hereupon he is apt to think he hath a great measure of Courage and Resolution for what is Good, and against what is Evil : But as for carnal Fear, that is a Snare to low and weak Spirits, that often makes them neglect their Duty, and sinfully

fully comply with what is Evil; this unmanly Passion he is not troubled with; he never observes that it interposeth to hinder him from the Performance of his Duty, or to make him comply with what is evil. A stout and courageous Christian he were indeed, if he were as much above all carnal Fear, and as free from it as he conceives himself to be. But let this stout and valiant Champion (for such a one he is in his own vain Conceit) come in Presence of his Superiours that are far above him, whose Frowns and Displeasure he would not incur, and whose Favour he courts, and what now becomes of his former Boldness and Courage? How doth he now in a base and cowardly manner shrink back when he should reprove Sin, fearing the Face and Displeasure of Man more than the Displeasure of the great God! How basely and unworthily doth he now stoop and comply with what is evil! How obsequiously doth he compose himself to the Humours and Vices of them whom he studies to please, and curry Favour with!

Thus I have in these Instances shew'd the Truth of the Point, That Corruption sometimes lies hid in the Heart of Man,

Man, and is not easily discern'd, till some occasion draws it forth, and makes discovery of it. The Uses hereof are these.

Use I. This may caution Men not to think too well of themselves, because they discern not such or such Corruptions and sinful Infirmities in themselves, which they take notice of in others. 'Tis possible that there may be the same, and worse in themselves, tho' they observe them not. For,

1. Perhaps they have not met with those Occasions and Temptations to draw forth and discover the Corruption which secretly harbours and lurks in their Hearts, which others have met with.

2. It may be that through their Self-love and Partiality to themselves, they may not see those Evils in themselves, which else might easily be discern'd.

3. It may be they seldom or never seriously reflect upon themselves, try themselves, and search their Hearts: so, through the Neglect of this Duty, they have little Acquaintance with themselves, they know little of their Corruptions and Infirmities, which they could not but find out and espy in them.

themselves, if they used any Diligence in making Search after them.

4. It may be through the Flatteries and Soothings of those that are about them, and with whom they ordinarily or frequently Converse, they see not those Vices and Corruptions in themselves, which are visible enough if they had Eyes to see them. But Flattery so blinds their Eyes, that they can see nothing in themselves but what is Good, or what they are willing to believe is Good. He that loves Flattery, and delights to hear his own Praises and Commendations, shall never want Flatterers, and consequently shall never come to know Himself, or to understand his Condition aright.

Use II. Seeing Corruptions may lie hid in the Heart of Man, and not be discern'd, till some Occasion draws them forth and makes Discovery of them,

This may teach us to be always watchful over our Hearts, and jealous of our Selves. We may be, and doubtless we are in many respects a great deal Worse than we suspect our selves to be. *The Heart of Man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Jer. 17. 9.* Such is the unseen Corruption, and secret Wick-

Wickedness of Man's Heart, that our Danger is much greater than we are aware of. If we knew how bad our Hearts are, and were truly sensible of our danger upon that account, we should no longer think our selves to be safe, than while we stand upon our Watch, keep our Hearts with all Diligence, and carefully decline and avoid all Temptations to Sin.

Use III. Seeing Corruption in the Heart of Man often lies hid, and is not easily discern'd, till some Occasion draws it out, and makes Discovery of it ;

This may teach us to be diligent in searching our Hearts, to be employ'd in observing the secret Stirrings and Workings of Corruption within us, to the end we may come to know our Hearts better, and to be more inwardly acquainted with our selves. How much more might we know of our selves than we do, if we observ'd our Hearts better, look'd more narrowly after 'em, took notice of all the Motions and Actings of Corruption within us ! and if we were thus careful to watch and observe our Hearts, especially when we meet with any thing that disturbs or discomposes us, that stirs up Corruption,
and

and puts it in motion; at such times if we had a watchful and intente Eye over our Hearts, how much experimental Knowledge of the Corruption of our Hearts and Nature might we attain!

And so I go on to another Observation. *In the business of the Embassadors of the Princes of Babylon God left him.* Hence we may in the 5th Place observe,

5. That God doth some times withdraw Himself from his Children, and in a great measure leave them to themselves. The Truth hereof may be confirm'd,

1. From the notable Falls of Good Men recorded in Scripture, many of which have been formerly mention'd. That God had withdrawn from them, and left them to themselves, when they fell so dangerously and shamefully, is evident; for if God had been with, as other times, to uphold and support them, they had not so fallen: Their Sin it was that they fell; but if God had not for just and holy Ends withdrawn from them, and for the Time left them, they might have been kept from falling, and had so been. But that was more than God was oblig'd to do for them,
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or they could challenge at his Hands.

2. That God doth sometimes withdraw from his Children, and, in a measure, leave them to themselves, is evident, from the frequent Complaints and Expostulations of God's People in Scripture, touching God's withdrawing from them, and from their frequent Prayers, that he would not leave them. *Cast me not away from thy Presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit, Psal. 51. 11, 12.* When David thus pray'd, he was sensible of God's withdrawing from him. Thus the Church of God expostulates and prays, *Is. 63. 17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy Ways, and hardened our Hearts from thy Fear? Return for thy Servants Sake, the Tribes of thine Inheritance.* Their meaning is, that God had left them to themselves, so as they hardened their own Hearts from his Fear, and erred from his Ways. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? Ps. 13. 1. Will the Lord cast off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? Ps. 77. 17. 8.*

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3. The Experience of all God's People is a further Proof hereof. Who is there that observes God's Dealings with him, and hath any Acquaintance with his own Heart, that is not often sensible of God's withdrawings from him? How full of inward Peace and Joy in Believing is a Man, how ready for every good Work, how active and lively in the Performance of every good Duty, and how strong and able to resist Temptations while God is present with him, and affords him the powerful Assistance and quickening Influences of his Spirit! But as soon as God withdraws and takes away his holy Spirit from him, he presently seems to be another Man, as *Sampson*, if he were shaven, would become Weak and like another Man, *Judg.* 16. 17. Now all Comfort, and Quickening, all spiritual Vigour and Life are gone. Now how Dull and Heavy is he! How backward to what is Good, how unable to perform any Duty in a right Manner, how easily he is overcome and worsted by every Temptation! These Things may be Riddles to some, but they are none to him who knows what 'tis to walk with God, and to enjoy communion with him. Now in the
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further handling of this Point, I shall

1. Shew how, and in what respects God withdraws from his Children.

2. How far he withdraws from them.

3. When he withdraws.

4. Why, or to what End he withdraws.

5. I shall briefly make Application of the Point.

The First Thing propounded was to shew how, and in what respects God withdraws from his People. This may be in some measure gathered from what hath been already spoken. When we speak of God's withdrawing, it must not be understood in a gross manner, as if God removed, as a Man, or any other Creature doth, from one Place to another. God is every where present, and 'tis utterly impossible that he should for one Moment be absent from any Place. To say or think otherwise of him, were to make him a finite Being, as we ourselves are. Such is the Immensity of his Being, that he fills Heaven and Earth, *Jer. 23. 24. Yea, the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him. 1 Kings 8. 27.* Wherefore, when God is said to withdraw from a Man, we must understand it not of his withdrawing his essential

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Presence, that I may so call it, but the powerful and gracious Effects of his Presence. Tho' in respect of his infinite Essence, and immense Being, he be still present, yet when he doth not so manifest his Presence, as at other Times, he is said to withdraw. So *Hos. 5. 6. They shall go with their Flocks, and with their Herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.*

Now God's leaving Men, or withdrawing himself from them, may be either with relation to outward Things, or with respect to their Souls and spiritual Concernments. With relation to outward Things, God withdraws when he doth not bless and prosper them in their temporal Affairs and Undertakings, when he doth not relieve them in their Afflictions, when he doth not supply their Wants in their Necessities, and the like. But this is not that withdrawing which I am now to speak of, but that other with relation to the Soul. And in this Sense God withdraws several Ways. As for Example,

1. When he takes away that comfortable Sense of his Love and Favour, which a Man hath formerly enjoyed.

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And especially when he so far leaves him to the Darkness of his Mind, and the Unbelief of his Heart, as that he calls in question God's Love to him, and doubts whether he hath, or ever had an Interest in his Favour. When he fears that God never own'd him for one of his; or if he did, that he hath now utterly forsaken him and cast him off. Thus it seems to have been with that holy Man, *Psf. 77. 7, 8, 9.* When he said, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? And doth his Promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in Anger shut up his tender Mercies?* Thus the Church sometime complained, *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me, Is. 49. 14.*

2. God sometimes withdraws the lively and quickening Influences of his Spirit, and leaves the Soul bowed down and oppressed with much Deadness. Thus it seems to have been with *David* often, and therefore he begs of God, that he would be pleased to quicken him. *My Soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word, Pl. 119. 25. Quicken thou me in thy way, vers. 37.*
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Quicken me in thy righteousness, vers. 40.

Quicken me after thy loving-kindness, v. 88.

When the Soul is loaded, heavily press'd down and overwhelm'd with this Deadness, it is utterly indisposed and unfit for any Duty, it can profit by no Ordinance, it can take comfort in no Promise.

3. God sometimes so withdraws from a Man, as that all his Graces, if I may so speak, seem to hang down the Head, to flag, and even to wither, and all his spiritual Strength to be lost, so that he hath no Ability for any Service required of him, no Power to resist or withstand any Temptation, with which he is assaulted. And this may suffice to have been spoken concerning the First thing, namely, how and in what respects God sometimes withdraws Himself from his Creatures.

The Second Particular was, to shew how far God withdraws Himself. I speak now of God's withdrawing from his Children, from such as are in Covenant with him, and have been made Partakers of saving Grace. I speak not of his leaving wicked Men, and withdrawing those common Gifts and Graces which he bestows on them, as the Spirit of the Lord is said to have departed from

Saul, 1 Sam. 16. 14. Tho' God doth sometimes withdraw from his Children, and leave them to themselves in great measure for a time, yet he neither withdraws from them totally, nor finally.

1. He never withdraws from them totally. They may apprehend that God hath totally withdrawn from them, and that they are perfectly deprived of all that was bestowed on them; that the Spirit of God, and all the saving Graces of the Spirit are gone; that they are as utterly void and destitute of them, as ever they were before God first wrought upon them. These, I say, may be their present Apprehensions, when God hath withdrawn from them. But they are mistaken. In times of Desertion they are not competent Judges of Themselves, or of their Condition. For,

1. Tho' Comfort be gone, and all Sense of God's Love, and tho' they feel no Operations or Effects of the Spirit of God in their Hearts, yet the Spirit still continues and abides with them, secretly upholding and supporting them.

2. Tho' the Actings and Exercise of Grace be suspended and interrupted, yet Grace it self is not taken away. The Habits

Habits of all Graces still remain in the Soul.

3. Though they are sensible of no Strength or Ability they have for any Service or Duty that is required of them, nor for resisting any Temptation they meet with, yet are they in some measure sensible of the Indispositions of their Hearts, they are burthen'd with them, they bewail them, and would fain be deliver'd from them; all which things in them are from the Spirit of God still abiding with them, and working in them, tho' in other ways than formerly, when they were sensible of his Presence with them, and of his Influences upon their Hearts, by comforting, quickening, and strengthening them. In short, we may not conclude that God hath totally withdrawn from us, and wholly taken away his Spirit, because we do not feel those Effects of his Presence, and Operations of his Spirit, which sometimes heretofore we have felt. Tho' he worketh not in our Hearts the same ways, yet he may still work in us other ways; and tho' he worketh not in us sensibly, yet he may work insensibly, and as powerfully and effectually however.

2. As God withdraws not totally, so neither doth he finally withdraw from such Men. He doth not withdraw once for all, he doth not so withdraw as never to return again. *The Mercies of his Covenant are sure Mercies, and the Covenant which he makes with his People is an everlasting Covenant, Is. 55. 3. Jer. 32. 40. The Love with which he loveth them is an everlasting Love, Jer. 31. 3. He will never leave them nor forsake them, Heb. 13. 5. Tho' he may withdraw, and hide his Face from them for a Moment, for a short Time, yet with everlasting Kindness will he have Mercy on them, Is. 54. 8. The Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance, Rom. 11. 29. His Spirit that is upon his, and the Word which he puts in their Mouth, shall not depart out of their Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of their Seed, nor out of the Mouth of their Seeds Seed, Is. 59. 21. The holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Christ promiseth unto his, shall abide with them for ever, John 14. 16. In a Word, whatever befalls them, however God deals with them, how far soever, and how long soever he withdraws from them, all shall work together for good to them, Rom. 8. 28. And nothing shall be able to*

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to separate them from the Love of God which is in Jesus Christ, Rom. 8. 38, 39.

I come now to the Third Thing propounded, which was to shew when God withdraws Himself. God withdraws from his People ordinarily when they have by their Sins provoked him. They were *David's* great Sins that occasioned Gods withdrawing of the Comforts of the holy Spirit from him, which made him pray that he would restore unto him *The Joy of his Salvation*, Ps. 51. 11. For the Iniquity of his Covetousness I hid my Face and was Wrath, said God, speaking of Israel, Is. 57. 17. He will hide his Face from them, as they have behaved themselves ill in their Doings, saith the Prophet Micah, speaking of the same People, Mic. 3. 4. Now God's hiding his Face from a People, what is it but his withdrawing from them his gracious Presence, the Light of his Countenance, and the Sense of his Love and Favour to them? And if you ask what those Sins are, for which God withdraws from his People, I answer, They are not Sins of pure Weakness and Infirmary, or Sins of Surprise, which a Man is on a sudden overtaken with sometimes, notwithstanding all his Care and Watchful-

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ness, his Heedfulness and Circumspection. Such Sins as these are, God mercifully overlooks and passeth by. *If he should mark Iniquities, who might stand?* saith the Psalmist, *Pf. 130. 3.* Especially, if he should mark such Iniquities as these are, and presently withdraw, hide his Face from them, take away his Spirit, and deprive them of all comfortable Sense of his Love. Wherefore the Sins for which he is wont to withdraw, are,

1. Wilful and Presumptuous Sins. When a Man will Sin against Knowledge, and the Dictates of his Conscience; when he will boldly and daringly venture upon those things, which he knows ought not to be done, and which his Conscience tells him cannot be done, without offending God and wronging his own Soul. 'Tis indeed no ordinary thing for a Child of God to be guilty of such Sins; yet may he sometimes be guilty in this kind. 'Tis not easy to conceive how *David* should not Sin presumptuously, when he contracted to himself the horrid Guilt of Adultery and Murther: For how could it be, but that his Conscience, even while he contrived the commission of these

these Sins, should not ever and anon fly in his Face, and tell him, that what he was Plotting and Contriving, was not only unlawful, but highly provoking in the sight of God. And the same may be conceived of *Jonas* going to *Tarshish*, against the expresse Command of God, whereby he was enjoin'd to go to *Nineveh*, *Jonah* 1. 1, 2, 3. When any Child of God commits these Sins, it is not at all to be wonder'd at, that upon the commission of them, God should withdraw the quickning Influences and Consolations of his Spirit, as he did from *David*. How dangerous these Sins are, *David* was otherwhile very well aware of, and therefore he Prays, that God would keep him from them, *Pf.* 19. 13. from these Sins in a special manner, from these above others.

2. Another Sort of Sins, for which God is wont to withdraw from his People, are scandalous Sins. When the Sins of Men are such as open the Mouths of the Enemies of the Gospel, bring Reproach upon Religion, and cause the Name of God to be Blasphemed. And such also were *David's* Sins, as God himself aggravates them, 2 *Sam.* 12. 14.

3. Sins

X 3. Sins whereby the Spirit of God is in a special manner quench'd and griev'd; and such are Sins against Charity, Sins against Peace and Love. Such are all Clamors, Revilings, Evil-speakings, Malice, Wrath, Revenge, and the like, *Eph. 4. 30, 31.* By such Sins as these the holy Spirit, (the Fruits whereof are Love and Peace, *Gal. 5. 22*) being griev'd, withdraws, and leaves a Man to himself, destitute of Comfort, of spiritual Life and Strength, leaves him, in great measure for the present, under the Power and Dominion of Sin, to be acted by the impetuous Corruptions of his own Heart, and to be overcome, worsted, and carry'd away by every Temptation. Thus I have shew'd that ordinarily God withdraws from his Children, when they have by their Sins some way or other provoked him; and I have shew'd what those Sins are, for which he mostly withdraws. But yet
X however it cannot be absolutely and universally affirm'd, that God never withdraws from his Children, unless when he hath been thus provoked thereunto. We know not that he withdrew from *Hezekiah* upon any such Provocation: no such thing is express'd in the Text.

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'Tis only said, *That in the Business of the Embassadors of the Princes of Babylon God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart.* There may be other Seasons and Occasions of his withdrawing, namely, when he hath some other gracious Intention and Design, in order to the Good of the Person from whom he withdraws.

And this brings me to the Fourth Particular, and that was to shew why, and to what end God withdraws from his People. The most wise God, who doth nothing in vain, hath always some special End, which he aims at in withdrawing from his People. And in the general, that he evermore designs and aims at their Good in all his Withdrawings from them, cannot be question'd, for as much as he himself hath declar'd, *That all his Paths are Mercy and Truth to them that keep his Covenant, Psal. 25. 10. And that all things work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose, Rom. 8. 28.* In particular, the Ends for which God withdraws from his People are principally these.

1. That he may thereby Correct them for their Sins, the Sins beforemen-

mention'd, by which they have Provok'd him, and incurr'd his Displeasure. And as their Sins have been at any time more heinous, and the Aggravations of them greater, so his Withdrawings from them are of longer Continuance, and the more grievous and afflicting to them. Sometimes when their Offences have been of an high Nature and very Scandalous, he doth not barely withdraw from them, but makes Impressions of his Wrath upon their Souls, so as that their Consciences are full of Anguish, and Horror, and they apprehend themselves to be utterly cast off and forsaken of God. In this sad Condition it may be they lie for a long time, and with much difficulty recover at last; and perhaps they never, while they live, fully recover what they have by their Sin deprived themselves of.

2. Another End of God's withdrawing from his Children is, that some Corruption, some dangerous Corruption, that secretly lurks and lies hid within them may be discover'd, the Discovery whereof unto them God knows to be very Necessary and Advantageous, and their not discerning it to be of dangerous Consequence to them. To this
End

End it was that God withdrew from *Hezekiah*, and left him to himself. There was a great deal of Pride that lay conceal'd and unobserv'd in *Hezekiah's* Heart, he himself not being aware of it. This secret Pride might sometime or other do him a great deal of Mischief, if it still shelter'd it self within him, and kept Possession of his Heart, he knowing nothing of it, nor in the least suspecting that he cherish'd such a dangerous Inmate. Wherefore God judg'd it needful, that he should take notice of it, and have a watchful Eye over so dangerous an Enemy ; and therefore to the end he might discover it, and be aware of it, God left him to himself when Occasion was offered of venting that Corruption, and when he was to meet with Temptations that might set it a work, act it, and draw it forth.

3. God sometimes withdraws from his Children, that they may know their own Weakness better, and be more sensible of it. They are many Times apt to think themselves much stronger than they are ; which is an Error so Dangerous and Mischievous to them, that God suffers them not to continue in it. To convince them of their Mistake, and unde-

undeceive them, he is pleased to withdraw from them, and leave them to themselves; and then by falling they feel how weak they are, and how unable to stand longer than God supports them. How confident was *Peter* of his own Strength! *Tho' all Men should deny his Master, yet would not he deny him; he was ready to go with him both to Prison and to Death, Luke 22. 23. Matth. 26. 33, 35.* But when being left to himself, he most shamefully Denied him, and with such Circumstances as greatly aggravated his Sin, then he saw his Mistake in entertaining so good an Opinion of himself, and came to understand his Weakness.

4. God is pleased sometimes to withdraw from his Children, that his Presence with them, and the Effects of it upon their Hearts, at other Times may be the better discern'd, and that they may see the Difference between his Presence, and his Absence from them. What that Light and Comfort, that Peace and inward Quiet, that Calmness and Tranquility of Spirit, that spiritual Life and Strength, and those Quicknings are, which Men enjoy while God is present with them; I say what these Things are,

are, and whence they are, from whom they come, and to whom they are indebted for them, they would not so well understand, unless God did sometimes withdraw from them, and leave them destitute of the gracious Effects of his Presence, and the Operations and Influences of his Spirit. By his withdrawing from them sometimes they come to know what 'tis to enjoy God's Presence, and to be without it. If God did never withdraw, Men would never understand the great Difference between God's Presence and his Absence; and besides they would be ready to think all the Effects of God's Presence with them to be from themselves, and not from him.

5. God sometimes is pleased to withdraw from his People, that they may prize his gracious Presence more, that they may be the more thankful for it; and make the better Improvement of it while they do enjoy it. Such is our Corruption and the evil Frame of our Hearts, that we are not so sensible of the Worth and Value of good Things, nor so thankful for them, nor so careful to improve them, when we constantly enjoy them. But the Absence of them sometimes, is wont to raise our Esteem
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of them ; and to increafe and heighten our Thankfulness for them ; as also to make us the more careful and solicitous to make the best use of them that we can, while God is pleased to continue them to us.

X 6. God is pleased to withdraw sometimes from his People, that he may thereby make way for the more full Discoveries of his Love to them, in all the comfortable Effects of his gracious Presence with them afterwards. This Method of God's Providence we may frequently observe ; great Troubles in the Soul usher in great Comforts ; great Darkness, the clearest and most heavenly Light ; the greatest Anxieties and Perplexities of the Spirit go before the greatest Peace, and the greatest Discomposures and Disorders, the most grievous Hurries and Distractions of the Soul, make way for the sweetest Calm, and the most desirable Tranquility thereof. Thus by Darkness God prepares us to entertain the Light, and commends it to us ; and by the sad and woful Consequents of his Absence, prepares us to entertain the most comfortable Effects of his Presence with us, and commends them to us.

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So I come in the Fifth and Last Place to make some brief Application of what hath been spoken. I have shew'd that God sometimes withdraws from his Children ; and I have shew'd how, and in what respects, how far, when, and to what End he withdraws Himself.

And this may in the First Place admonish us both highly to prize God's gracious Presence with us, and carefully endeavour to attain the Continuance of it.

1. Highly to prize God's gracious Presence with us. We have seen how comfortable his Presence is, and how great the Advantages of it are ; and how uncomfortable his Absence and Withdrawing is, and how sad the Consequents thereof. If we have any Sense and Experience of these Things, we cannot but account his gracious Presence a singular Favour, and set an high Price upon it.

2. Carefully to endeavour the Continuance of it to us, and to do what in us lies to prevent his withdrawing from us.

Now to the End we may enjoy the gracious Presence of God, and prevent his withdrawing from us, We must

1. Take heed that by our Sins we provoke him not to depart from us ; especially we must beware that we run not upon the Sins before mentioned, presumptuous Sins,

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scandalous Sins, and Sins by which the Spirit of God is in a special Manner grieved and quenched. This is the chief Thing to be done for preventing God's withdrawing from us. Did we not by our Sins provoke him to depart from us, how much more constantly might we enjoy his gracious Presence than we do! For the most Part we may impute his Withdrawings and Departure from us, to our Miscarriages in one kind or other.

2. Let us evermore be truly thankful to him for his gracious Presence with us, and count it an inestimable Favour that we enjoy it. Thankfulness for our Mercies is our best Security for the Continuance of them; but by our Unthankfulness we make forfeiture of them, and give God just occasion of taking them away from us.

3. Whereas notwithstanding our greatest Watchfulness against Sin, and our utmost Care to avoid it, we shall however sometimes be overtaken with it, we must labour to be speedily and thoroughly humbled for our Failings. If this be our constant Practice after all our Falls, God is so merciful and gracious, and so easy to be entreated, that he will not presently hide his Face in Displeasure, and withdraw from us upon occasion of every Miscarriage.

4. Let

4. Let us carefully observe the Beginnings of all God's Withdrawings from us, and by earnest Prayer and Humiliation for Sin, labour to recover him again before he be quite gone from us. For the most Part God doth not withdraw and depart from us on a sudden; he doth not leave us wholly at once, but by Degrees. We take notice, it may be, that we have not that full and comfortable Enjoyment of his Presence which formerly we have had; we are somewhat more out of Order than we were wont to be; we find Darknes and Deadnes, and Indisposednes to what is good, coming on upon us we know not how. We find our Hearts are not in such a quiet and composed Frame as heretofore; we find that every little Thing disturbs and disorders them. By all this it appears that God is going, and therefore now is the Time that we should speedily take hold of him, and use our utmost Endeavours to keep him with us. If once he be gone, and his gracious Presence be withdrawn, it will be no easy Matter to recover him.

Use 2. In the Second Place, what hath been said concerning God's withdrawing from us, may teach us what we are to do, and what Course we must take, that we may recover God's gracious Presence, when he is withdrawn from us.

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1. We must bewail our Loss in his Absence from us, look upon it as a very great Affliction, and so account it.

2. We must earnestly long after his Presence with us again; we must lament after the Lord, as the *Israelites* did, when the Ark, the Sign of God's Presence, was taken from them, *1 Sam. 7.* 2. We must so earnestly desire his Presence with us again, and so affectionately lament after it, as that we should never be at rest until we recover it.

3. We must enquire after the Cause of God's withdrawing from us, search after, and find out those Sins by which we have provok'd him to depart from us, be humbled for them and forsake them. This is the Way to recover God's Presence with us when we are deprived of it.

Use 3. Seeing God doth sometimes withdraw from his People, and for a Time leave them to themselves; and seeing he never doth it but when he hath some gracious Design therein, and when he intends to make Advantage of it for their Good in the End; We may hence learn to observe diligently the Issues and Consequents of all God's Withdrawings, and how he makes them Advantageous and Beneficial to us in the End. His Withdrawings are many Times very sad for the present, and the Effects of his Withdrawings may be afterwards much more

more sad, yea dismal. But yet at length God turns all to our Advantage. We are Gainers in the End by all such sad and uncomfortable Providences. Either God by them humbles us for our Sins, and takes off our Hearts from our Sins, which is an invaluable Mercy; or he makes us know our selves better, he discovers to us our Weakness, makes us sensible of it, and more watchful, and dependent on himself; or he afterwards vouchsafeth us more clear and full Discoveries and Manifestations of his Love to us, more abundant Satisfaction, touching our Interest in him, than ever we had before. In some of these Ways, or perhaps some other Way, as to his Wisdom seems best, he makes us amends for the sad Effects of his Withdrawing from us, and makes us Gainers by our Loss. Now as the *Psalmist* saith of some other Providences of God, *Pf. 107. 43. He that is wise, and will observe these Things, shall understand the loving Kindness of the Lord.* He that will diligently observe the Events and Issues of God's Withdrawings, and the Advantages which he makes of them for our Good, shall understand much of the Wisdom, Goodness, Loving-Kindness, Truth, and Faithfulness of God to his People, and gain much Experience of the Ways of his Providence towards them, and his Dealings with them. And so much of that Use.

Use 4.

Use 4. Seeing God hath such gracious Designs in his Withdrawings from his, and seeing he maketh such Advantages of them for their Good in the End, this may help to bear up our Spirits under God's Withdrawings, and not only to keep us from sinking, but to encourage us to wait patiently and hopefully, to see a good Issue out of those dark Providences, with which we are at present overcast and incompassed. God knows how to cause all Things, how adverse and contrary soever, to work together for our Good; if we be such as belong to him, he will certainly turn all to our Advantage in the Conclusion. How sad soever it be with you at present, see that you wait and pray, that you humble your self and reform, and then 'tis but yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, *Heb. 10. 37. Light is sown for the righteous, and Gladness for the upright in Heart, Ps. 97. 11. Is. 30. 18. Psal. 73. 23, 24, 25, 26. The Lord is a God of Judgment* (he perfectly understands the best Time, and meetest Season for shewing Mercy) and therefore *blest are all they that wait for him, Is. 30. 18.*

So at length I have done with this Observation; there is yet one more to be spoken to. *In the Business of the Embassadors of the Princes of Babylon God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart :*
Those

Those Words, *That he might know all that was in his Heart*, if they be understood of *Hezekiah's* knowing all that was in his Heart, have no Difficulty at all. *Hezekiah* by being thus left to himself, came to know the Pride that was in his Heart, which he was ignorant of, which he discern'd not in himself before. But if they be understood of God's knowing all that was in *Hezekiah's* Heart, then they cannot be understood properly, but as spoken after the Manner of Men; for God being Omniscient, the Searcher of Hearts, and Tryer of Reins, could not be ignorant of what was in *Hezekiah's* Heart. He was perfectly acquainted with the Pride of his Heart before, and needed not the Help of this Experiment to inform himself. Wherefore, those Words, *that he might know all that was in his Heart*, can signify no more but this, that all that was in his Heart, and lay hid before as being known to none but God only, might now be made known and discover'd. Now whereas God on Purpose left *Hezekiah* to himself to try him, that all that was in his Heart might be known, that the secret Pride of his Heart might be discover'd, we may hence in the

Sixth and Last Place observe, That 'tis of great Concernment that the Hearts of Men, or the secret Corruption of their Hearts should sometime be discover'd, and laid

open. Had it not been of great Concernment, that the Pride of *Hezekiah's* Heart should be discover'd, God would never have left him to himself, and suffer'd him to fall so shamefully and dangerously, that the Pride of his Heart might be discover'd and made known. Now it is of great Concernment that the Hearts of Men, that is to say, that the secret Corruption which lies hid in their Hearts, should sometime be discover'd and made known, in reference to God's Glory, in reference to themselves, and in reference to others.

I. It is of great Concernment in reference to the Glory of God, and this several Ways.

1. The Discovery of the secret Corruption of Men's Hearts conduceth much to the Manifestation of the Riches of God's pardoning Grace; in that, tho' they be so bad, and the Corruption of their Hearts so abominable, yet for Christ's Sake, and upon the Account of what he hath suffer'd for them, God is pleas'd mercifully to pass by, and pardon their Sins; and that, however he is pleas'd to own them for his Children, and doth not disown them and cast them off how bad soever they be.

2. It much conduceth to the Manifestation of the Power of his sanctifying and restraining Grace, in that tho' there be such abominable Corruption, and desperate Wickedness

edness in their Hearts, as sometimes appears, yet God by his sanctifying or restraining Grace, for the most Part keeps it down and suppresseth it; that he so curbs it and holds it in, as that it doth not much more frequently break forth and discover it self.

3. It much conduceth to the Manifestation of the Glory of the Loving-Kindness, Bounty, and Goodness of God, in graciously Accepting, and liberally Rewarding the imperfect and worthless Services of such vile and sinful Creatures; the Services of those whose Hearts are so polluted and defil'd.

II. It is of great Concernment, that the secret Corruption of Men's Hearts should sometimes be discover'd, in reference to themselves.

1. That seeing how corrupt and desperately wicked their Hearts are, and what abominable Filthiness there lodgeth in them, they may be the more humble, and think more soberly of themselves.

2. That knowing the Wickedness of their Hearts, they may be the more watchful over them.

3. That being sensible of their Weakness, and the Falleness, Deceitfulness, and Wickedness of their Hearts, they may go out of themselves, and betake themselves to God for Strength to keep under and subdue their Corruptions.

4. That

X 4. That they may be the more thankful unto God, that he is pleased in any Measure to restrain their Corruptions; and that they may give him all the Glory of their being upheld and kept from falling, and of their Perseverance. To whom can they ascribe this, but unto God, if they know what wicked and deceitful Hearts, and what corrupt and sinful Natures they have?

5. That they may be the more charitable, and also the more tender and compassionate to others when they fall, *considering themselves lest they also be tempted*, as the Apostle speaks, *Gal. 6. 1.* In all these respects 'tis of great Concernment, with reference to themselves, that the secret Corruption that lies hid in Men's Hearts, should sometimes be laid open and discover'd.

III. 'Tis also of great Concernment in reference to others.

1. To make them more jealous of themselves, and more watchful over themselves, when they observe the Corruption of others breaking forth, and discovering it self; and when they take notice of the shameful and dangerous Falls of such, as perhaps were better and stronger than themselves. And,

2. To make them more thankful to God for restraining their Corruption, and keeping it in, when the Corruption of others is let loose, and breaketh out; and for up-
holding

holding them when tempted, or for keeping off Temptations from them, when others are both tempted, and overcome by Temptations.

3. To correct their Mistakes and rectify their Judgment concerning them, of whom perhaps before they had too high an Opinion. They over-rated them, it may be they admired, and fondly idoliz'd them before; but now since the Corruption of their Hearts hath been discover'd, they begin to think more soberly of them.

4. The Discovery of the secret Corruption that lies hid in the Heart, may afford some Matter of Support and Comfort to others when they fall. When they are much dejected, humbled, and afflicted from the Sight and Sense of their own Failings and Miscarriages, it will be some Relief to them to consider that others, far better than themselves, have had their Failings, yea, that they have not been free from some gross Miscarriages; their Corruptions, tho' for the most Part kept in and restrain'd, have however sometimes broken out; and broken out violently and shamefully; and yet God hath own'd them still for his, and hath not for their Excesses, presently cast them off, and broken his Covenant with them. I come now to apply what hath been spoken.

Use I:

Use 1. If it be of such Concernment that the secret Corruption of Men's Hearts should sometimes be discover'd and made known; and especially that they themselves should take notice of it, and discern it; this reproves Men's Unwillingness to be acquainted with themselves, and to know their own Hearts. This their Unwillingness to know themselves, and to be acquainted with the Corruption of their Hearts, discovers it self divers way. As,

1. By their Unwillingness to search, try, and examine themselves, and commune with their Hearts. No Work is so unacceptable to most Men as this is; they are not more averse from any thing almost, than from looking into themselves, and ransacking their Hearts.

2. By their Unwillingness to be searched by the Word, hating that kind of Preaching which searcheth deepest, and lays them open to themselves.

3. By their Impatience when they are reproved; by their stopping their Ears against Reproof, and Christian Admonition.

4. By their denying their Guilt, when most justly charg'd; and by their shifting it off upon others; and extenuating and lessening their Offences, even when they are such as admit of no Apology, Mitigation, or Excuse. By all this it appears, how un-

unwilling most Men are to know themselves, and to be thoroughly acquainted with their own Hearts.

Use 2. Let us therefore be perswaded to be willing to know our Hearts, and labour to be acquainted with them.

1. To be willing to know our Hearts. This Willingness to know our selves, is a great thing, both in respect of the Difficulty of attaining it, in regard of our Averse-ness from it, and in respect of the Advan-
tages thereof when attained.

Now to make us willing to be thoroughly acquainted with our selves, Let us consider the Folly of our Unwillingness to know our selves, and the Danger thereof.

I. Let us consider the Folly of our Un-
willingness to know our selves.

1. We are never the better for shutting our Eyes against our Deformities. Our Spots and Blemishes, our Vices and Cor-
ruptions are neither the less, nor the fewer, because we do not see them.

2. Our sight of them gives us an Oppor-
tunity of providing against the Evils that attend them, and which they will certainly bring upon us, unless we prevent them.

II. Let us also consider the Danger of be-
ing unwilling to know our selves.

1. To be unwilling to know our selves is a very ill Sign. 'Tis that which is a just
ground

ground of Fear, that our spiritual Estate is unsound, that we are not sincere and upright. For the sincere Christian is willing to search himself thoroughly and impartially, that he may be rightly inform'd concerning his Estate, and not deceive himself; and he is willing and desirous to be search'd by others, that he may have their Judgment also concerning his Condition.

2. When a Man is unwilling to be acquainted with his Heart, and to come to the sight of his Sins, it may justly be fear'd, that he is not truly willing to cast off and abandon his Sins. If a Man were willing, and earnestly desirous to forsake all Sin, 'tis very probable, that he would be willing and desirous to find out and know all his Sins, that he might forsake them.

3. He that is unwilling to know himself, and be acquainted with his own Heart, may live in the constant and allow'd Practice of some Sin, and not take notice of it, or be aware of it.

4. Such a one may be in the State of Wrath, and in a damnable Condition, and not discern it, or think himself in the least concern'd to endeavour to better his Estate. All these Things consider'd, should any Man be unwilling to know himself; to be thoroughly acquainted with his Heart, and to be rightly inform'd concerning the State of
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of his Soul? Doth it not highly concern him not only to be willing, but to use his utmost Endeavours to be thoroughly acquainted with himself?

And this leads me to the other Branch of this Use.

II. Let us not only be willing to know our selves, but earnestly endeavour it. And this,

1. By seeking unto God, and frequently begging and imploring his Assistance therein, as the *Psalmist* did, saying, *Search me, O God, and know my Heart, try me, and know my Thoughts; and see if there be any wicked Way in me, Ps. 139. 23, 24.*

2. By taking Pains with our Hearts, that we may be acquainted with them, by making diligent and impartial Search and Enquiry into them, that we may find out whatever secret Corruptions harbour and lurk privily in them.

3. By bringing them, as often as there is Opportunity, to the Light of the Word, for the better Discovery of what is in them.

4. By calling in the Help and Assistance of Christian Friends where we are at a Loss, and cannot by our own Endeavours satisfy our selves. He that shall with serious Diligence and Uprightness of Heart, make use of these Means, shall come to understand and know himself better every Day; which
Know-

Knowledge, next to the Knowledge of God and Christ, is the Best, the most Excellent, and the most Desirable Knowledge.

SERMON

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd on the 30th of *January*,
being the Anniversary of the
Martyrdom of King *Charles I.*

I Sam. XXIV. 4, 5, 6, 7.

And the Men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand, that thou mayst do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the Skirt of Saul's Robe privily. And it came to pass afterward that David's Heart smote him because he had cut off Saul's Skirt: And he said unto his Men, The Lord forbid that I should do this Thing unto my Master the Lord's Anointed; to stretch forth my Hand against him, seeing he is the Anointed of the Lord: So David stay'd his Servants with these Words, and suffer'd them not to rise against Saul.

THIS Portion of Scripture presents to us a lively Portraiture of the Loyalty of a Subject toward his Prince, even when assaulted with the high-

est Temptations to Disloyalty. The Words may be resolv'd into these Parts.

1. A Representation made to *David* of a very fair Advantage now offer'd him against *Saul* his mortal Enemy. The Men of *David* said unto him, *Behold the Day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand, that thou mayst do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.*

2. The Use which *David* made of the Advantage offer'd him, and represented to him : *Then David arose, and cut off the Skirt of Saul's Robe privily.*

3. The Impression which *David's* Reflection on this his Act afterward made upon his Spirit. *And it came to pass afterward that David's Heart smote him because he had cut off Saul's Skirt.*

4. The Consequent of the Impression made upon his Spirit. *And he said unto his Men, The Lord forbid that I should do this Thing unto my Master the Lord's Anointed, to stretch forth mine Hand against him, seeing he is the Anointed of the Lord.*

5. The Effect which these Words of *David* had upon his Men. *So David stayed his Servants with these Words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul.* Of these, in order as they lie in the Text, and of the Particulars comprehended under them, which because they are many, and will afford us ma-

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ny Observations, I must run some of them over with the more speed, and speak to them but very briefly. In the first of these, the representation made unto *David* of a fair Advantage offered him against *Saul*, there are these Particulars considerable.

1. The Quality of the Persons that made this Representation to him, They were *David's* Men; his Servants and chief Officers about him; and these probably in the Name of the Generality of that Party which adhered to him, and followed him.

Great Men seldom want those about them who upon occasion will be too ready to instigate and thrust them on upon unwarrantable Actions. And this they will the rather endeavour, if their own particular Interest may be thereby secured, or their Designs promoted. Thus it was with *David's* Men. They had hitherto appear'd for and follow'd *David*, and upon that account they must expect no Favour, nor Mercy from *Saul* if they should at any Time fall into his Hands. Wherefore they looked upon *Saul's* Ruin as their own Security. And as for *David*, if *Saul* were once cut off, the Crown would be his, and thereupon, whatever Favour or Preferment they were capable of, they had some reason to believe they might well expect from him, seeing they had faithfully adhered to him in his Troubles, and adventured their Lives for him.

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2. If they apprehend the Minds of their Superiors to be already bending that Way, and that it will be very pleasing to them to be put upon such Enterprizes. The Servants and Dependents of great Men, who have the Ear of their Masters, and may freely suggest what they please, do not always consider what Advice would be fittest to be offer'd, but what is likely to be most acceptable; nor what their Masters may justly and lawfully do, but what they have a Mind to do; and accordingly suit their Counsels to their Humour, rather than to their Duty and true Interest. 'Tis not altogether improbable, but that this also might have some Influence upon *David's* Servants: They might happily think they could not offer any Thing that would be more grateful to their Master, and find better Entertainment with him; for who almost would not be willing to be put into a Way whereby he might be speedily rid of an implacable and merciless Enemy? And so much concerning the Persons which represented unto *David* the Advantage which he then had against *Saul*.

II. We have the Representation it self. *Behold the Day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand, that thou mayst do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.* For our better understanding of which Words, we must look back upon the

the former Verse, where we read that *David* and his Men were in a Cave; such Caves there were in those Countries, the Largeness whereof was such, that One of them might receive several Hundreds of Men. And (as it seems) there were in the Sides of these Caves many times, large Recesses, and spacious Dens, and lurking Holes, in which great Numbers of Men might hide themselves, and not be seen of those who came into the Cave; and 'tis likely some lesser Holes and hiding Places might be on purpose made near the Mouth of the Cave, where they who were hid, though unseen themselves, might by the Light at the Entrance of the Cave, easily discern who came in. In the Sides of some such Cave, *David* and his Men having disposed of themselves, *Saul* comes into the Cave to cover his Feet, that is, either upon that Occasion and that Errand, which that Phrase in Scripture ordinarily imports, or as some think, to lay him down to Sleep; and the rather, because unless he were Asleep, 'tis not so easy to apprehend, how *David* could have such Access to him, as to cut off a Piece of his Robe, and not be discover'd. And indeed, as it was an ordinary thing, in those very hot Countries, for Men to betake themselves to such cool and shady Places, to Sleep a little in the midst of the Day, so the Phrase

of Covering his Feet, may suit that Intent of his coming into the Cave very well. For when Men lay them down to Sleep, 'tis usual to Cover themselves; and the Covering of the Feet in particular may be therefore mention'd, because when they compos'd themselves to Sleep, they did probably shrink up their Feet under the Covert of their long Robes, which when they stood or walked, did not reach down altogether so low. So the Phrase of Covering their Feet is ambiguous; which tho' it mostly notes another thing, yet (according to this Interpretation) it may also not unfitly signify, to compose themselves to Rest. However it were, some of *David's* Men had taken notice of *Saul's* coming into the Cave, and had so long heeded and observ'd him there, till he was in such a Posture and Condition, that he was now fully in *David's* Power; he might not only have cut off the Skirt of his Robe, without being discover'd, as he did; but have cut off his Head, and taken away his Life, if he had been dispos'd to do it. This is the Advantage which they represent unto him; and they do it most artificially, in that Language, and with Insinuation of those Arguments, which they knew were most likely to take with so Good and Holy a Man as *David* was. In their Representation of this Advantage
to

to him, there is one thing imply'd, and another exprefs'd; and both of them such, as seem'd to be of no small Force to Perswade *David* to make the most of the Advantage against *Saul*, which was now given him. The thing imply'd is, the Providence of God, in thus bringing *Saul* into the Cave, and there giving *David* the Opportunity of easing himself of so furious and restless an Adversary. The thing exprefs'd is, that God had herein dealt with him according to his Promise: *Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine Enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.* Their Arguments seem'd to be as Cogent and Pious, as their Language was tending to promote his Interest. Had God now by Providence deliver'd *Saul* into his Hand, and this according to his Promise, and should *David* slight a Dispensation of so much Grace and Favour to him? Was this the very Day, concerning which God had spoken to him? And should *David* neglect to improve it? What would this be, but to forsake his own Mercies, or to thrust them away from him. Four great Evils there might seem to be in *David's* neglect of such an Opportunity.

1. It would have had at least an Appearance of great Unthankfulness to God, who

had put this Advantage into his Hands; yea, more than the Appearance thereof, if things had been altogether so as they represented them.

2. He should have been regardless of his own Safety, and have wilfully still lengthen'd out his own Dangers and Troubles, to which he might now have put a speedy End.

3. He might seem to have little regard of the Safety of his Adherents and Followers, if he would not now consult their Quiet and Security, by making use of an Expedient so safe, easy, and obvious.

4. He might never live to see the like Advantage put into his Hands again, if he should let slip this. God, who had Promised him this Day for being Avenged of his Enemy, had not Promised him another, nor could he reasonably expect another, if he should make no more use of this. All this seems to have been wrapt up in this short Representation of the Matter, which they offer unto *David*: And the truth is, if indeed God had now, according to some Promise formerly made to *David*, thus deliver'd *Saul* into his Hands, that he might cut him off, and given him a Commission and Authority so to do, these Arguments had been most forcible and unanswerable. But the Matter stood far otherwise than they represented it. For,

1. There

1. There was never any such Promise made to *David*, as they pretended and urg'd him with. God had Promised him the Kingdom of which *Saul* was then possess'd, and by Consequence, that he would deliver him out of the Hand of *Saul*, and so preserve his Person in all Dangers, as that he should out-live him. But that *David* should cut him off, and so make his own way for his ascending to the Throne, he never Promised him; this was their own false Gloss upon God's Promise. And that which led them to this Mis-interpretation of God's Promise, was,

1. Their eager Desire, that the Advantage they now had against *Saul* might be improved, and so an End put to their Fears and Dangers from him, and way made for their Advancement and Prosperity under *David's* Reign.

2. Their applying and making use of a mis-understood Providence, as a Key to open and expound the Promise. God had now brought *Saul* into the Power of *David*, and as they would have it, left him to his Mercy to deal with him as was most for his own Interest and Safety; and therefore this must needs be the Meaning of God's Promise to him. How wide was this of God's Intentions! Alas! He had other Ends in giving *David* this Advantage against *Saul*, than
that

that he should be thereby Encouraged and Countenanced to stretch forth his Hand against him, and take away his Life.

1. God would hereby try *David's* Obedience to Himself, and Loyalty to his Sovereign. He would see, whether by this specious and strong Temptation, he would be drawn off from his Allegiance to God and his Vicegerent.

2. Whereas *David*, by his Enemies and *Saul's* Flatterers, had been represented to his Sovereign as a Disaffected and Disloyal Person, that watch'd his Opportunity to take away the Life of his Master, God, by bringing *Saul* into his Power, gives him an excellent Opportunity of giving such Proof of his good Conscience towards God, and Loyalty towards *Saul*, as might be sufficient to stop the Mouths of all his most malicious and unreasonable Adversaries, and to extort even from *Saul* himself, as it afterwards did, an Acknowledgment of his Fidelity.

3. God would hereby make Trial of his Faith; and a notable Trial thereof it was, under which he enabled his Servant to acquit himself as became a Person of such Experience of God's Faithfulness, and who had laid up by him so many Instances of God's keeping his Promise, and of his dealing with him according to his Word. There were Two things in which God, by this Providence

dence of bringing *Saul* into his Power, did remarkably try his Faith.

1. In reference to the Kingdom which God had promised him. Now the Kingdom long since promised him, might seem to be put into his Hand, if he would but make use of the Advantage he had against *Saul*. One Blow would have set the Crown upon his Head: 'Twas but to strike off *Saul's* Head, or run him through the Heart, and the Business had been done. And he need not have stretched forth his own Hand to do it; he had Attendants enough who wanted to be employed in that Work. Behold here an high and glorious Act of *David's* Faith. Tho' God had by his Providence brought him now so near the Kingdom, that he might seem to have one Foot upon the Footstool of the Throne, and could not miss to get up the other, if he would but harden himself to strike one good Blow himself, or suffer any of his Followers to do it; and tho' neglecting this Opportunity, he knew not how long he might wait, nor through how many Dangers and Difficulties he might wade, before he could come again to be as near the Scepter as now he was; yet he deliberately chuseth to wave the present Advantage he had, and to cast himself upon God's Promise, and wait his Time, how long soever, for the fulfilling it, rather

ther than he would offer any Violence to his Sovereign, or suffer Violence to be offered him by any other, tho' he might thereby gain the present Possession of a Kingdom.

2. In reference to his Men also, his Faith was notably tried, and he gave singular Proof of it. He knew not what ill Blood his refusing to comply with the Proposal of his Servants, might breed among the Soldiery. Upon their Adherence to him, his Safety under God much depended, and therefore it might seem very dangerous to disoblige them. If they upon Offence taken, should turn Head against him, (as that Generation of Men is fickle, inconstant, turbulent, mutinous, in a Readiness to make Insurrections against their Leaders and Commanders, upon smaller Matters than this was) what would become of him, might he think, and how should he be able to secure himself against their Rage and Violence? These were great and apparent Hazards which he must run, if he would not be of their Mind, and gratify them in dispatching *Saul*. But no plausible Arguments, or specious Pretences, no Importunities, no Apprehensions of Danger, can perswade or impel him to run head-long upon so great a Sin: He is resolved whatever may come of it, to keep himself within the Bounds of his Duty and Loyalty,
and

and in so doing to trust God with his Safety: He hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand, and can easily rebuke and quiet the turbulent Spirits of his Adherents; or if he shall think fit to permit them to be unruly, yet he knows how to provide for his Safety some other Way. He had promised to preserve his Person, and set the Crown upon his Head, and he was able to make good what he had promised, without his Sin. And thus I have shew'd how much *David's* Men both mistook the Intent of God's Promise of the Kingdom unto *David*, and the Design of his Providence in bringing *Saul* into his Power. From hence we may learn,

I. That as we greatly dishonour God, so we extreamly wrong our selves, by so heeding Providences, as to make them our Guide rather than the Word. For hereby we expose our selves to the Danger of being drawn, or rather hurried on, to the Commission of the most horrid Sins. The dismal Occasion of our present Meeting, is but too undeniable a Proof hereof: Had not some Men given themselves up, to be guided more by mis-understood and mis-apply'd Providences and private Impulses, than by the clear Light, and unerring Clue of the Word, in all Probability there had been no Cause of this Days Assembly, for bewailing a Crime of so heinous & scandalous a Nature, that I think,
taking

taking all the Circumstances of it together; it will be a hard Matter for any Man to find an Instance of the like Complection to parallel it, tho' he should search all Antiquity, and ransack the Histories of all precedent Ages. Taking in, I say again, and putting together all the Circumstances of it; the Quality of divers of those who chiefly managed it, they being Persons of the highest Pretensions to Piety, and the Power of Godliness; and with very many in the highest Esteem and Reputation, upon the Account of their eminent Zeal and Holiness; the Design held forth and pretended to therein, namely, the Execution of Justice, and the securing of Religion and Reformation; the great Reproach that it brought upon true Piety and the sincere Profession of Religion; the foul Blot thereby cast upon the Reformation, and the Protestant Cause; the great Advantage thereby given to the common Enemy; whose Mouths were hereby opened against us, and their restless Endeavours for undermining Religion encouraged; and lastly, the sad and deep Resentment of all this in the Reform'd Churches Abroad; I say, all these Circumstances consider'd, I believe scarce any Age will afford an Instance of so black, ugly, and formidable a Complexion. And yet all this we owe very much to our heeding mistaken Providences

The Thirteenth Sermon.

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dences and private Impulses, rather than the Word of Truth, that cannot mislead us.

But Things being as they are, and since we have contracted so foul and prodigious a Guilt, what else have we now to do, but to endeavour what in us lies, to undo what hath been done.

1. By Disowning it sincerely, cordially, and from a thorough Conviction of the foul Evil and Enormity thereof.

2. By Resenting it deeply, and Bewailing it heartily, not slightly and formally, as 'tis to be fear'd some of us do, and many more not so much as formally, never or very seldom affording us their Company here upon this Occasion. Were this great Sin, and the foul Scandal, and sad Consequents of it, duly and generally taken to Heart by us, according to the horrid Nature and Aggravations of it, our Congregations on this Day would not be so thin.

3. By giving so much the fuller Proof of our Loyalty and Fidelity to our Sovereign for the time to come, yielding him ready and chearful Obedience in all lawful Things, bearing hearty Affection to him, truly Wishing and Desiring, and fervently Praying for his Life and Happiness, temporal and eternal; and in our several and respective Places and Stations, doing what we can for the Safety and Welfare of his Person, and for
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procuring and preserving in the Hearts of all his Subjects, a due Reverence of his Authority, and an humble Submission to his Government *for the Lord's Sake*, (as *St. Peter* speaks) who hath set him over us, and whose Deputy and Minister he is to us for our Good.

4. By being, as long as we live, so much the more afraid of following the Guidance of Providences, and Impulses beside the Rule; and by giving up our Selves entirely and universally to the Conduct of the reveal'd Will of God, adhering closely to the Word, walking exactly according to that Rule, and never daring, upon what Colour or Pretence soever, to turn aside from it to the Right-hand or the Left. This is the best Course we can take for wiping off and washing out some Part of that foul and deep Stain, that by this shameful, scandalous, and never-sufficiently bewail'd Miscarriage, we have contracted to our Selves, our Religion, and Nation.

II. We may hence further learn, that to mis-interpret and mis-apply Promises, is a thing of dangerous Consequence. Had not *David* been well Principled, and very Wary, and tenderly Conscientious, and rightly Inform'd, concerning the true Meaning of God's Promise to him, into how great a Sin might the Suggestions of his

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Servants, urging him with the Promise of God, have betray'd him! Tho' this Point deserve to be more largely insisted on, yet for the Present I shall only say this; Let us all be admonish'd to take heed how we take up Promises, and apply them rashly; a Thing wherein too many have been not a little Faulty. Two Things, as to this Matter, we should be very careful of.

1. That we get the true Sense and Intention of Promises; that we rightly understand the Meaning and Scope of God in them; which will not be done without a diligent looking into them, and our serious weighing of them.

2. That when we understand them aright, we also apply them aright; else they may be of no other Use or Advantage to us, than to put us upon, and encourage us in, unwarrantable Enterprizes, or to build us up in carnal Security, and harden us in Sin to our Ruin.

III. We may also hence observe, that true Friends, and those of whose real Affections and Faithfulness to us, we have had much Experience, may sometimes offer and suggest evil Counsel to us. *David's Men*, especially those of them who were nearest him, and whom he most trusted, were, no doubt, such as had constantly and firmly adhered to him in his Troubles, and abundantly ap-

proved their Faithfulness to him. Yet these, his most faithful Adherents, would have put him upon a very bad and unlawful Enterprize. And there are divers Reasons thereof.

1. Our best and most faithful Friends know but in Part, and may sometimes be mistaken. Yea their very Love and Affection may blind their Eyes, and make them, for the present, incompetent Judges of what concerns our Duty and true Interest.

2. They may be transported with Passion, misled with Prejudice, and turned aside out of the right Way, by the Biass of private Interest, and Self-concernments.

3. Satan may make use of them, and of them to chuse, as he did of St. *Peter*, *Matth.* 16. 22, 23. the better and more effectually to insinuate his Temptations. He knows, the good Opinion we have of our Friends, our Affection to them, and the Experience we have had of their Fidelity, open our Hearts to give readier Entertainment to what they offer us, and make us suspect no Evil or Danger in what comes from them.

The Consideration hereof may caution us to weigh and examine the Counsels of our best Friends, before we embrace and follow them, lest sometimes, purely upon their Insinuations and Suggestions, we rashly engage in that which afterwards both we and they may have cause to be sorry for, but cannot redress.

IV. There

IV. There is hence yet one Observation more, namely, That pernicious Counsels may sometimes come recommended to us by such Language and Arguments, as seem to have much of Piety and Religion in them. How religiously and piously do *David's Men* seem to speak and argue, even while they offer him such Counsels as he saw cause to abhor! *Behold the Day, say they, of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand, that thou mayst do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.* Satan, the better to get within us, when he would do us a Mischief, can *transform himself into an Angel of Light*, 2 Cor. 11. 14. he can speak the Language of *Canaan*, and quote Scripture too, when it may be wrested to serve his Turn, *Matth. 4. 6.* And he can help his Instruments to do the same, where it may conduce to the furthering of his malicious Designs upon us.

And this may warn us to examine even those Counsels, that are drest up and presented to us in the most religious Forms, and enforced by Arguments that seem to favour of much Piety. Poison may be given in a Pill that is covered over with Gold, and the worst Counsels may be most specious and alluring. Bring all Advices and Counsels that are offered you, to the Touch-stone, compare them with the Word, weigh them

in the Balance of the Sanctuary, and then you are safe.

So I have done with the *First* Thing in the Text, The Representation that was made unto *David*, of a fair Advantage now offer'd him against *Saul* his mortal Enemy. I come now to the *Second* Thing observable in it, which was the Use that *David* made of this Advantage : Then *David* arose, and cut off *Saul's* Robe. I have been long on the former ; of this, and the rest that follow, more briefly. Here we are to take notice, that it was but *Saul's* Robe or Mantle, an outer and loose Garment that *David* medled with, and only to convince *Saul* that *David* was not the Man whom he took him to be, one that thirsted after his Master's Blood, and watched for all Advantages against him to destroy him, and therefore that there was no Cause why *Saul* should entertain any Jealousies of him ; much less why he should so mortally hate him, and so furiously pursue him. This was all the Use that *David* made of the Advantage which he had against his Master : Which seem'd to be so inconsiderable an Improvement of so fair an Advantage, that *David's* Men were not a little displeased at it ; they were all in a Flame, and in a Readiness to rise up and do that Execution upon *Saul* with their own Hand, which *David* had forborn to do.

And,

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And, yet, Thirdly, it came to pass afterward that David's Heart smote him because he had cut off Saul's Skirt. David's Heart smote him, that's the Phrase which is also used upon the like Occasion, 2 Sam. 24. 10. *David's Heart smote him after that he had numbered the People.* Which Expression implies, that upon Reflection he condemn'd himself, and his Conscience check'd him for what he had done ; that he was Troubled at it, and his Heart was affected with Regret and Grief at the Consideration of it. But why so? You will say ; What Hurt had he done? And what Offence was there in that Action, that should create any Trouble to him? It was but a little Part of an outer loose Garment that he had cut off, and *David* intended no Hurt therein to *Saul*, as hath been said before. All this consider'd, was not *David* Troubled causlessly? Was he not more tender than he needed to have been? 'Tis true, so it is sometimes, a Man's Heart smites him without just Cause, and perhaps his mis-inform'd Conscience accuses and checks him, where it should have excused him, it may be where it should have comforted, cheared, and encouraged him. But this was not *David's* Case here. Tho' his Offence was much lessen'd by the Circumstances last mention'd, yet it cannot be deny'd, but that an Offence it was, and that

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David in being Troubled about it, was not vainly Timorous, or needlessly Scrupulous. To have cut off the Skirt of the Garment of an ordinary Person, of one of the meanest Rank, had been both an Indignity and an Injury; how much more of a Prince, tho' he had been a Foreigner, and one to whom *David* owed no more Honour or Respect, than any One of us doth to the King of *Spain*, or the Emperor of *Germany*, or any other Person of like eminent Quality: how much yet more then, when it was his own Prince, unto whom over and above the Honour due to those, whom God's Providence hath advanc'd so far above us, there was due from him the more peculiar Honour of a Subject to his Sovereign? Besides, what ground have we in the Text to affirm, that he was Troubled without Cause? The Text saith, *David's Heart smote him because he had cut off Saul's Skirt*; but where doth it say, or by any Word or Syllable intimate, that it smote him without Cause? Or where did *David* ever afterwards intimate so much? Where doth he say any thing whereby he condemns his own Trouble upon that account as groundless, and as proceeding from a pure Mistake of the quality of that Action? Well then, taking it for granted, that *David's* Heart smote him upon good Grounds, not for an imaginary, but a real
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Miscarriage, and that his Conscience did but the office of a faithful Friend in checking him: We may observe, That Sin, tho' it trouble us not for the present, while we are committing it, leaves its Sting behind it. For the present divers Things make us insensible of the Evil, and mischievous Consequences of what we are doing. As Inadvertency, Heedlessness, and Inconsideration. A Man minds not the Nature and Consequences of what he is about till afterwards. *Men consider not that they do Evil, as Solomon speaks, Eccles. 5. 1.* A little after, a Man could even tear his own Flesh, that he hath been so Foolish, and wonders how he could be so Mindless, unless he had been Asleep, as not to think of the Evil and Danger of what he was engaged in.

So I pass on to the *Fourth* Thing in the Text; The Consequent of the Impression made upon *David's* Spirit after he had reflected on what he had done in cutting off *Saul's* Skirt: *He said unto his Men, the Lord forbid that I should do this Thing unto my Master the Lord's Anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the Anointed of the Lord.* When *David* had spared *Saul's* Life himself, he stay'd not there, but did his utmost to preserve him and secure him against the Rage and Violence of his Men, who were now in a Readiness to fall upon

upon *Saul* themselves. Most Men when the Prize of a Kingdom lay before them, would not have stuck to have permitted that to have been done by others, which they would not do themselves, for the obtaining of it; or if in Prudence they would seem to dissuade them, yet they would have done it in such a manner, so coldly and indifferently, as they might decline and turn away the Blame and Odium from themselves, rather than hinder the Action. But *David* here doth not dissuade his Men with such Coldness and Indifferency, as if he had no Mind to prevail with them. He is in earnest, and preserve his Master's Life he will, if it be possible. That he is in earnest appears both from the Form and Manner of his Speech, and from the Force of his Arguments.

1. The Manner of his Speech is most Emphatical, and argues the greatest Zeal and Earnestness. *The Lord forbid*, saith he, *that I should do this Thing*; which is a Form of Speech by which Men express the highest Detestation, and most perfect Abhorrence of any Thing. He would never have expressed himself in that Language unless he had intended to let his Men know, that he was so far from being well enough contented that they should do that which he thought not fit to do himself, that he utterly abhor'd the thought of it.

2. He

2. He shews he is in earnest, by making use of the most cogent and forcible Arguments.

1. *Saul* was his Master, and in respect of that his relation to him, there lay a strong Obligation upon him to offer him no Violence himself, nor to suffer Violence to be offered him by any other, so far as he could hinder it.

2. He was the Lord's Anointed; God had by the Ceremony and Solemnity of Anointing, cast some Rays of his own Authority upon him, appointed and declared him his Vicegerent, and thereby made his Person in a manner Sacred: and should *David* be so hardy and presumptuously bold and daring as either to stretch forth his Hand against a Person so Signaliz'd, or to suffer his Men to do it? *The Lord forbid that I should do this Thing*, saith he here: *for who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed and be Guiltless?* saith he upon the like Occasion to *Abisbai*; 1 Sam. 26. 9.

Now whereas *David* thus bespeaks his Men, after that his Heart had smitten him for cutting off *Saul's* Skirt, we need not question but that his Trouble upon that Account, had a great Influence upon his Earnestness and Zeal here.

Whence we may observe, That God, by causing our Hearts to smite us for smaller Sins,

Sins, keeps us from contracting to our selves the Guilt of greater Sins. Happy we, if we can preserve that Tenderneſs of Conſcience, as that it may ever check us for the leaſt Sins; ſo ſhall we be the better arm'd and fortified againſt the Assaults of greater Sins.

Again, whereas *David* endeavouring to withhold his Men from offering Violence to *Saul*, ſaith, *The Lord forbid that I ſhould do this Thing unto my Maſter, the Lord's Anointed*, as making account that what he ſuffered his Men to do, that he did himſelf, we may obſerve, That we derive upon our ſelves the Guilt of thoſe Sins, which we ſuffer others to run into, when we might and ought to hinder them. But I only name theſe Obſervations.

The laſt Particular in the Text follows, which is the Effect that *David's* Words had upon his Men: So *David ſtay'd his Servants with theſe Words, and ſuffer'd them not to riſe againſt Saul*. By this 'tis evident that they were all in a Flame, and would immediately have riſen and cut off *Saul*, had not *David* interpoſ'd. But what was there in thoſe Words that made them ſo powerful to charm down and allay the Turbulency and Fury of *David's* Men? Surely thoſe two Things before mention'd, 1^{ſt}, The Force of his Arguments, which were ſuch as could not be gainſay'd,
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unless by those whose Passions and Self-interest had bereft them of their Reason; He was his Master, and their Master also in some Sense; and he was the Lord's anointed: and 2dly, The most emphatical, zealous, and affectionate Manner of his urging these Arguments; *The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my Master, to stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed.* These Arguments thus press'd and set on, were of Force to over power *David's* Men, and to work their turbulent and boisterous Spirits, to the same peaceable and loyal Temper with *David's*. *Oh! how forcible are right Words,* saith *Job*, Chap. 6. 25. What a powerful Influence and Efficacy is there in sound Arguments rightly enforced, and zealously managed with a sincere Design, and earnest Desire to make them prevalent. May we never want such Arguments as may keep us within the Bounds of our Obedience and Loyalty to those whom God hath set over us.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

PAge 6. line *ult.* read Apostle. P. 16 l. 1. r. 4. P. 66. l. 4. r. Pf. 77. 2. *dele* 2 l. 5. P. 91. l. 2. *dele* but. P. 98. l. 20. *dele* 5. P. 104 l. 20. r. Word. P. 108. l. 13. r. 1st. P. 109. l. 1. r. all. P. 133. l. 9. r. 2. Shall. P. 138 l. 3. r. IV. P. 140 l. 2. r. V. P. 153. l. 3. r. rhings. P. 159 l. 1. r. VI. and so VII, &c. to XIII. P. 235. l. 16. *dele* and prying. P. 261. l. 19. *dele* of him. P. 274. l. 19. r. assume the. P. 285. l. 21. r. nearest. P. 370. l. 10, 11. r. and more. P. 372. l. 18. *dele* a. P. 419. l. 7. *dele* to. P. 424 l. 14. r. *Jabin*. P. 445. l. 1. *dele* II. P. 499. l. 7. r. I l. 17. r. 1. If.

N.B. Pag. 82. l. 4. Of Christ, consult the following Sermons on Rom. IX. 5.



